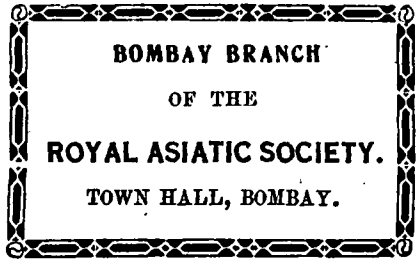
923.242
Dis/Macbeth
140880



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, M.P.

A LITERARY AND POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY.

Addressed to the New Generation.

140880 a1

" Before this, the English People have taken very preternatural-looking Spectres by the beard; saying virtually: And if thou *wert* 'preternatural'?"—*Carlyle.*

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY; NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1854.

[*The Author and Publisher reserve to themselves the right of Translating this Work.*]

00140880

LONDON : PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

A

LITERARY AND POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

I THINK it my duty to state the conclusions which an attentive consideration of Mr. Disraeli's career has forced upon my mind. If there be anything that has more distinguished the political history of our country than another, it is, that, however much the great offices of state may have been made the prize of individual ambition, there have still been some great rules of political morality which have seldom been violated, and never altogether outraged without general reprobation. I cannot but think that these great principles of English morality, by being brought from the quiet domestic

firesides of England on to the great political arena, have done more even than the industrious energy and practical genius of the people, in making England what she is. She has hitherto been a standing witness against political atheism. She has taught her children to cling to the faith of their forefathers. She has exhibited a majestic spectacle of quiet constitutional law and order, and has embodied in her public history the same qualities that beautify an ordinary English home.

The virtues that make an Englishman respectable in private life, are earnestness, generosity, high principle, magnanimity, modesty, sincerity, steadiness. We have been called a nation of shopkeepers by a brilliant egotist who had no virtue at all; but even he would have admitted that we had at least the virtues of shopkeepers. The English statesman has sometimes had the vices, but he has also generally had the virtues of the English tea-dealer. Now and then indeed the great rules of political morality have been disregarded; but he who has disregarded them has never been applauded, and has frequently been thought infamous. Genius has never been the Englishman's god. Brilliancy has never been considered as quite synonymous

with virtue. We have had good tradesmanlike Walpoles, and dashing unprincipled Bolingbrokes; but the Bolingbrokes have been despised with all their brilliancy, and the Walpoles admired with all their shopkeeper-like respectability.

It may be the distempered dream of a recluse, yet I cannot but think that England is now in some danger of forgetting those great moral laws. Were it once to be admitted that success covers every sin, and that genius and ability sanctify every crime, I see nothing to prevent our constitution from being subverted, and the country from becoming such as would not be worth preserving. The disregard of the great moral element in political affairs is what has generally convulsed societies, destroyed constitutions, and ruined empires. If we do not learn this from the histories of Greece and Rome, if we do not especially learn it from the gloomy prospect whithersoever we turn our eyes throughout continental Europe at this day, our learning is but foolishness. The gibbets of defunct constitutions are set up in every highway. The scarecrows of political immoralities shake in every breeze. If we fall, we fall with our eyes open; for all the warnings of the dead, and all the signs of the living, tell us to cherish our good old English virtue, and walk in the ways of our ancestors.

However much a particular person may prefer the party to which he is attached to the other sections into which the nation is divided, there can be no question that there is much good, much honesty, and much patriotism among Tories, Conservatives, Whigs, and Radicals. There is something definite in each of these respective political creeds. Taken separately they may only embrace half a truth, but it is a half truth of great importance to the welfare of the community. If any one of these parties could be extinguished, the loss to England would be great. They are all intensely national. They all spring from the English soil. For a moment, after the first French Revolution broke out, there were indeed some sanguine people who were deluded by the new lights, but they soon discovered that those were mere will-o'-the-wisps, and now, in this respect, we are all of one mind. Even Mr. Cobden contends not for the rights of men, but for the rights of Englishmen. Much as he may think that Burke was not quite so liberal as he would have wished that great man to have been, Mr. Cobden's notions on abstract rights are all Burkeish, and English; and whatever Mr. Cobden may suppose, Burke himself was not more opposed to Paine than our present free-trade apostle is in many of his notions. This is a cheering sign to all who

really love their country: as long as it continues, we need not under any circumstances altogether despair.

One man, and one man alone, actively engaged in English politics, and professing to be the leader of the greatest of national parties, aspires to be a political regenerator, after the fashion of Bolingbroke, and endeavours to strike some new light from the collision of Whig and Tory principles. Bolingbroke, whom Mr. Disraeli so greatly admires, was, it is well known, though he believed himself a Tory, a thorough-going French revolutionist. Whatever he might say, the only intelligible and logical conclusion to all his speculations was atheism. Of political morality, such as has regulated the conduct of most English statesmen, he had no idea. When Mr. Disraeli endeavours to introduce a new Toryism, founded on Bolingbroke, he ought to remember that, as Bolingbroke was an infidel, he could not be a sincere Tory. He was indeed, what Mr. Disraeli acknowledges himself to be, a democrat; but this combination of democracy and monarchy has no real analogy nor foundation in any part of our history. It could not be so when our ancestors were in the German forests, and their chosen leader was the mere companion and director

of rival chieftains. It could not be so when William the Conqueror parcelled out the domains of the Saxon lords among his armed barons. It could not be so, when on that fine June morning the Great Charter was extorted from King John. It could not be so during the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, when, whatever might be the principle for which these turbulent lords fought, it was certainly not a democratic principle. Jack Cade was indeed a democrat, after the true fashion of all such political regenerators, as much as Henry the Eighth was the true type of a patriot king.

But to what do such speculations lead? In a time of established government, like this, they lead directly to revolution, or they lead to nothing. If they are combined, however, with lax morality, as they were in the person of Bolingbroke, they indicate something even worse than revolution; they tend to that horrible political atheism which is riding, like a nightmare, in the dreams of all the continental politicians. This directly affects all honest Tories, all honest Whigs, all honest Radicals, all honest Englishmen. To them, therefore, these pages are addressed, under a sense of grave responsibility. No paltry personalities shall fall from this pen; no unfair advan-

tage shall be taken of the errors of a brilliant and imaginative mind. It is necessary to trace Mr. Disraeli throughout his literary and political career, but it will be done in no ungenerous spirit.

This is not said through a mere affectation of candour. I admit fully that if any man be entirely destitute of all claim to indulgence, it is the subject of this biography. Personality is his mighty weapon, which he has used like a gladiator whose only object is at all events to inflict a deadly wound upon his adversary, and not like a chivalrous knight, who will at any risk obey the laws of the tournament. Mr. Disraeli has been a true political Ishmael. His hand has been raised against every one. He has even run amuck like the wild Indian.

Who can answer a political novel? Libels the most scandalous may be insinuated, the best and wisest men may be represented as odious, the purest intentions and most devoted patriotism may be maligned under the outline of a fictitious character. The personal satirist is truly the pest of society, and any method might be considered justifiable by which he could be hunted down. It would, therefore, seem only a kind of justice to mete out to Mr. Disraeli the same measure which he has meted out to others. As he has ever

used the dagger and the bowl, why, it may be asked, should not the deadly chalice be presented back to him, and enforced by the same pointed weapon? This may be unanswerable: yet I hold that no generous man would encounter an ungenerous one with his own malice. Socrates would not have gained in our esteem by retorting, as he was fully capable of doing, had not his virtue restrained him, the malicious wit of Aristophanes. The cause of goodness does not gain by encountering evil with evil, personality with personality. In moral philosophy, two negatives do not make a positive. Evil can never produce good. Personality in public discussions when great principles are involved, is always an evil. Besides, it cannot be concealed, that such has been Mr. Disraeli's success in wielding the new and unfair weapon which he has brought into the literary and political field of battle, that our moral sensibilities have become somewhat blunted, and, like many other vicious things, personalities which were at first odious are now beginning to be admired by a certain class of Englishmen. Young people especially, who have not meditated deeply on the great principles of political morality, are not aware of the danger that may lurk in a cutting sarcasm. There is no weapon like this for

gratifying the worst passions of human nature. An habitual use of it will soon convert a naturally humane man into a very unamiable being. Mr. Disraeli has many admirers even among those who profess opposite political opinions, and it is painful to read or hear some of the criticisms on his speeches. He is alluded to as "being in voice," as "hitting right and left," as being "up to the mark;" as though he were some trained prizefighter, who entered the ring fully prepared for a pugilistic contest.

We are naturally inclined, as it has been often said, to imitate what we admire. If such exhibitions in the House of Commons continue for the next twenty years, and such criticisms be penned, in which all mention of right and wrong is as quietly omitted as in the political writings of Machiavelli, not only will the style of parliamentary debating be changed, but our politicians will degenerate, until there be no trace in them of that genuine English manly morality which has so highly distinguished the nation. The greatest and most profound of political writers have ever looked in the first place at the moral aspect of every political action. They have gone further. "Politics," says Burke, "so far as I understand them, are only an enlarged morality." This was Burke's great doctrine;

yet while people are laughing at Mr. Disraeli's hits, it is entirely forgotten.

Surely this is a great evil. It is incumbent on all who are sensible of its magnitude to attempt openly and fairly to put it down. For this reason I do not continue in this volume of literary and political criticism a war of sarcastic personality, whatever temptations Mr. Disraeli's career may offer to those who do not look closely to the consequences. None can be more sensible than Mr. Disraeli how much he has exposed himself to the arrows which he has so deliberately and so inexcusably aimed at others. He must be sensible what a mark he affords to an opponent who could forget all self-respect by being as reckless as he himself has been. But this would defeat the very purpose I have in view, and therefore this opportunity is carefully avoided.

We ought not indeed to applaud when our moral judgment disapproves. When an author is obliged to comment on circumstances and things with earnestness and sincerity, a discriminating reader will not confound this with malignity. If I conceal nothing I shall certainly exaggerate nothing. But it is the solemn duty of the moralist not to speak well of evil. They who have not had their moral sense quite perverted,

and have not laughed themselves into insensibility, will fairly consider what is here written. Conscious of no motive but the public good, with little to hope or fear from any political party, strongly attached to principles, but indulgent to mere opinions, neither Whig nor Tory, but a respecter both of the sincere conservative and the sincere liberal, I have no dread of the partisan's malice. They whom Mr. Disraeli has led through maze after maze, and who are still ready to surrender themselves blindfold to his guidance, will doubtless not agree with much that is here recorded. But these are not the people of England. Many of Mr. Disraeli's errors which are here pointed out would perhaps never have been committed, had he not, with all his point and cleverness, been ignorant of the English character. No politician who hoped to gain our confidence would have taken the course which this extraordinary man has pursued. Mr. Disraeli has learnt much from Sir Robert Peel; but there is something he might yet learn by meditating on the last years of the life of that excellent, but not faultless minister.

Mr. Disraeli is now the chosen, or self-elected champion of what he calls a territorial aristocracy. He dislikes the commercial features of

this age, and has no very great love of political economy. It must, however, be remembered, when he declaims so much against manufacturers and government by the middle classes, that his own ancestors were Hebrew merchants, and that his own grandfather made his fortune in the "midway of life." Mr. Disraeli is, as he has himself informed the public, a descendant from a Hebrew family that was driven out of Spain by the Inquisition some four centuries ago. They took refuge in the Venetian territories, and continued as merchants in Italy for two hundred years. This may account for the peculiar epithet "Venetian," which Mr. Disraeli applies indiscriminately in his writings to Whig aristocracies and liberal attorneys. The Disraelis had, it appears, a Gothic surname, which they deliberately discarded, and assumed the name of Disraeli, a name never before borne by any other family, a name which they expressly took, says their youngest and most distinguished representative, "in order that their race might be for ever recognised."

It was in the middle of the last century that the great name of Benjamin Disraeli was first known in England. In 1748 our hero's grandfather first came to these shores, he being the younger son of a Venetian merchant, who, be-

lieving that England was then favourable "to commerce and religious liberty," sent his little Benjamin to settle in the land. To this principle of religious liberty, which the present Benjamin Disraeli declares an "equivocal principle," and to commerce, whose representatives he so indignantly denounces, it is therefore owing that his forefathers came to England, and that he is born an Englishman. Henry Pelham was supposed to be favourable to the Jews, but the grandfather of Mr. Disraeli was thoroughly disgusted, as he well might be, when in 1753, the House of Commons so disgracefully repealed the Jew Bill in obedience to popular clamour. What a commentary this is on the Jew Bills of the present day! Fifteen times has the measure for the relief of the Jewish Disabilities been read in the House of Commons, though inveterately opposed by the colleagues and supporters of the living Benjamin Disraeli. Compare 1753 with 1853. Compare the Benjamin Disraeli of the one century with the Benjamin Disraeli of the other. The grandson of that Benjamin Disraeli, who, trusting to the protection of Pelham, and to the tolerant sentiments then just becoming prevalent, came to England as to a place of sojourn, and was so deeply hurt at the insults offered to his race in 1753, is the leader of the very party in 1853,

that has so repeatedly and so scornfully refused to the greatest of Jewish merchants, representing the most important constituency of the kingdom, the common privileges of a British citizen. If old grandfather Benjamin could rise from his grave, and see his brilliant and accomplished grandson sitting on the benches with the men who have resisted the claims of his race, and the friend and colleague of Mr. Walpole, who said that the Jews were aliens, might strike their tents to-morrow, and go to another land, some strange thoughts would pass through grandfather Benjamin's mind.

Far be it from any honourable man to reproach Mr. Disraeli for being the descendant of his Jewish grandfather, or for even acknowledging himself to be a Jew, but one who believes in both parts of the Jewish religion. This attachment to his persecuted race is the best part of Mr. Disraeli's character. On this subject he is apparently in earnest, and for his devotion to the Hebrews, if he would not compromise it with pitiful party interests, he would deserve to be respected. But how can he be the leader of those who so unworthily brand his forefathers? This is the dark blot which grandfather Benjamin would have seen, and which no declamations about territorial aristocracies can ever wipe away. It

will be indelible as long as the name of Disraeli continues to justify the proud assumption of his ancestors, that "their race should be for ever recognised." Edmund Burke was an Irishman when his native land was oppressed by penal laws. Did he ever compromise the claims of his Roman Catholic countrymen? Would he ever have been the colleague or the champion of any English politicians who stigmatized them as aliens?

Ignorant of what his future grandson might do, Benjamin Disraeli made an Italian retreat near Enfield. Here he continued, living happily, until 1817, when he died, leaving an only son, of peculiar intellectual endowments as his heir and representative. This was Isaac Disraeli, to whom all gossiping students of English literature are under such great obligations. His father wished him to be a merchant, but this was not to be. Isaac Disraeli was born a dreamer; a dreamer he lived, and a dreamer he died. He was an honourable and respectable literary man, a true author of the old school, who devoted himself to literature in spirit and in truth. Happy old Isaac Disraeli, whose life was bounded by thy library! Ten times happier perhaps than thy aspiring son, whose ambition is bounded only by the universe!

On comparing Isaac and his son Benjamin

together they seem somewhat ludicrously contrasted. Yet the present Mr. Disraeli seems to have derived one peculiar quality from his father: Isaac, with all his gentleness, was extremely paradoxical, and was never satisfied unless he was making what he supposed to be discoveries in English literature and history, and these discoveries were for the most part monstrous paradoxes. He always admitted that he could never understand English politics even in his own day; a very little consideration might therefore have told him that he was not likely to be an infallible judge of English politics two centuries ago. Yet, after poring for years in his library, he boldly delivered opinions on men and things which a little knowledge of mankind would have shown him to be erroneous. No mere bookworm can ever understand our political history. A man must be learned in human nature, and not in the learning of libraries merely, before his conclusions can be trusted on the political characters of his own time; but the qualifications of the man of the world are even more necessary to one who would fully appreciate what is hidden in the mists of the past. Isaac Disraeli had another want which is still more fatal to a right understanding of the times of the first Stuarts—he could scarcely be called an Englishman, and had

little sympathy with English prejudices. No man is so incapable of appreciating the effect of religious enthusiasm as one who is entirely destitute of veneration; hence Hume of all men was the least fitted for writing the history of the most religious people of modern times. Isaac Disraeli was not indeed a Hume; but he had no sympathy with the Puritans; he could not comprehend their brave and heroic spirit. It is not to be wondered at then that Laud appeared to him a much more estimable prelate than, with some good intentions, he really was.

Mr. Disraeli has this part of his father's character in its fullest extent, and has expounded some very strange paradoxes on our history to the puzzled English people. But then it may be said of Isaac Disraeli and his paradoxes, that he at least believed them himself, and brought them forward in simple honesty, with no ulterior motive. But the son has a political purpose to serve by his strange doctrines, and therefore they are less to be trusted than even those of old Isaac. History, to an ambitious man who finds himself thwarted in his projects by parties of which he cannot be the leader, and by principles of which he is not the originator, is a grand magazine of offensive weapons, which may be sharpened and bent for any kind of warfare. In due

time it will be necessary to examine attentively some of Mr. Disraeli's new theories: this habit of Isaac has doubtless had considerable influence on the ingenious political Benjamin. Much too as Mr. Disraeli may have written and spoken about nationality, it may well be doubted whether he has, any more than his father had, much real sympathy with the old English political parties. He calls himself a Tory indeed; but his Toryism is a peculiar Toryism of his own: it is some modification of Bolingbroke's Toryism, and it is to be feared, is, like that of his great master, no Toryism whatever. Mr. Disraeli is perhaps as much precluded by his oriental sympathies, as Bolingbroke was by his deism, from having much profound veneration for the first principle of all genuine, earnest Toryism, implicit belief in the Church of England, and entire devotion to her rubric. The simple fact of Mr. Disraeli recommending Bolingbroke as an admirable exponent of Toryism, may be, in itself, a proof that he has no idea what real Toryism is. It is certain that some of the keenest sarcasms against the prelates of the established church have been penned by Mr. Disraeli. In his last novel, when he was becoming the leader of the country party, the bishops are called "mitred nullities." Had such expressions been used by an orator of

the Manchester school, they would have been denounced as revolutionary. They, perhaps, do not appear more conservative even in the book of this Tory champion, who is ready to warn us against the "Jacobin clubs of Manchester." Bolingbroke, in his most vehement declamations against divines, could scarcely have said more: and it would, perhaps, be well for all sound Tories who are not the wretched runners of party interests, and who think Toryism something more than a name, to ponder well on some of the facts which will be presented for their consideration in the following chapters. Toryism may exist, although outvoted in the House of Commons, sardonically grinned at by ministers, and ridiculed in newspapers. It has a root deep in the soil of England, and will flourish perennially as long as it is a principle. But when principle is forgotten in the mere clamour of rival interests, when, instead of a faith, Toryism is a mere negation to the positive liberalism of the age, when it is made the stalking-horse of selfish and unscrupulous ambition, it must degenerate and die, amid the scorn of the community. It can only be blighted by political infidelity.

Mr. Disraeli had considerable opportunities in his early years for studying the principles of

English parties. He had also advantages for his start in life in which many great men have been deficient. He was the son of a respected literary man, and Isaac Disraeli's reputation was such as to further his son's career. The son of a very great man has great obstacles to contend against: his father's name is sometimes a serious impediment. We expect great things from a great name, but we only expect respectable things from a respectable name. The name of Isaac Disraeli was not great, but it was most respectable. His son was also possessed of good literary abilities, and it therefore only depended upon himself, it only required a little discretion in order for him to become a public favourite. An author in the House of Commons can seldom be despised, whatever his controversial powers may be. The House in its collective character is really very indulgent. The country squires and city merchants, however strong may be their opposite prejudices, naturally respect a writer of books. Nobody ever thought of attacking Mr. Macaulay because he was an author. Though a Whig, even the Tories in the House admired him; for he was an honest, straightforward, and consistent Whig. He combined in his person the talents of the orator and the author; and they reflected dignity on each

other. The House of Commons was proud of him; England was proud of him; authors as a body were proud of him.

Mr. Disraeli might, had it so pleased him, have received the same tribute of universal approbation. If he has been attacked, if authors themselves do not always acquiesce in his pretensions, if they do not feel honoured by his career, it is not, as it has been most ridiculously asserted, from any mean envy. If, after the delivery of the great "national oration," when the leader of the House of Commons was convicted of the grossest plagiarism, and the national dignity was insulted by having the panegyric of the Great Duke stolen from that of an ordinary French general, this was resented, and spoken of in the manner it deserved. surely it was from no jealousy of Mr. Disraeli. Had any other minister done the same thing, it would have had the same condemnation. Had Lord John Russell, who is also an author, decked himself in the rhetorical plumes he had appropriated from M. Thiers, he would no more have been spared than the Chancellor of the Exchequer was. Yet, when Mr. Disraeli was blamed for this audacity, a remonstrance was put forth by a great authority against authors attacking one of their own body, who had committed the most extraordinary plagiarism of which ever orator was

guilty. ' It was said that literary men ought not to attack one who had made literature more respected, by having attained the highest honours of the state. Every high-minded author would surely scorn to defend another author in all his actions, however indefensible they might be, simply because the offender had become a minister. Never was there a more convenient apology made for a most heinous literary sin. Literature has no need of such a Malvolian dignity. The principle of "honour among thieves" can never be considered respectable, though it were to be adopted by the teachers of mankind. If literary men were to determine to act together in a corps, and gloss over the faults of each other, so far from this fellowship conferring dignity on them, they would be regarded by the public as an unprincipled and self-debasing confederation.

It would almost seem from these apologists that authors had never been ministers before, and that Mr. Disraeli attained his political position entirely by his authorship. The slightest consideration will show that he became the leader of the country party by being the most unscrupulous assailant of Sir Robert Peel, and not by being an author. Nearly a century and a half ago Joseph Addison became a secretary of state purely by his authorship. Was Addison attacked by a combi-

nation of literary men? The public mind was then much less enlightened than it now is, and the blind rage of party spirit was more furious than at any other period of English history, yet such an apology could never even then have been offered. Nobody ever dreamt of saying, in Queen Anne's reign, that literary men ought to wink at each others faults. Addison's conduct was such, that he was universally respected by men who agreed in nothing else. Even Swift, the most unscrupulous of party satirists, did not venture to write a single line against Addison. The greatest admirer of Mr. Disraeli will scarcely put him on a level with Burke, either as an author, orator, or philosopher. Did literary men conspire to write him down? If Mr. Disraeli is treated in a different manner, it may be because his conduct has been very different.

Much negative and some positive instruction may be derived from dwelling on Mr. Disraeli's literary and political career. When a man writes a book or makes a speech, he becomes a legitimate object of criticism. When he represents himself as an originator of new political principles, it is still more necessary to examine his writings and speeches attentively. Whatever is prominently before the public may be most justly commented upon; but it will not be

necessary here to consider mere rumours or even undoubted facts, when they have not had some curious bearing on Mr. Disraeli's maturity. Some apology he has also made for his first extravagances by speaking of this early period as the time when he was sowing his political wild oats. It may appear that the crop was indeed most plentiful, and required some extenuation; whatever is therefore found to be decidedly contradicted by his later opinions, it would not perhaps be generous to dwell much upon. But when these early buddings, however questionable they may be, have come to their full maturity, when they are still the leading maxims of his public conduct on all occasions, much may be said upon them, and they demand an impartial but a fearless consideration.

At the outset, one observation, which Mr. Disraeli will probably esteem a compliment, may be safely made. Whatever may be the fate of himself and of his speculations, whether posterity may consider him as an adventurer who was ready to profess any opinions and adopt any line of conduct to attain fame and power—or as a generous, high-minded, and patriotic statesman who never intentionally hurt the feelings of anybody, or did a single action that was not directed to the public good;

or as a mixed character like most men, with some right intentions and generous aspirations, but led into extravagances and immoralities by an unbounded vanity, which was itself the mainspring of a desperate ambition—there can be no doubt that, as long as English politics are studied, his political life, whether blamable or praiseworthy, as a warning beacon or a guiding star, will be a subject of startling interest. One great object, therefore, he has already attained. He has become a character in English history. He is most certainly teaching this "new generation;" and if his biography be properly written, will teach all coming generations of Englishmen.

The first essay in writing his life is now made. Before this book is read throughout it will have become more evident whether or not his statue at a future day shall deserve to be placed in a niche beside the great patriots of England, and whether or not the young politicians of distant times, as they pass through St. Stephen's Hall, shall bow to his image—as they now do, whatever may be their opinions on past times, in reverent admiration to the monuments of the Whig Hampden, and the Tory Falkland. The present electors of Buckinghamshire, whose representative Mr. Disraeli now is, are the descendants of those brave yeomen who so man-

fully supported John Hampden. The worshippers glorify their hero, and the hero glorifies his worshippers. The hero and the worshippers are made for each other. By the choice of their hero we may estimate the veneration that his admirers have for human excellence. Has the discernment of the electors of Buckinghamshire for patriotism and magnanimity improved during the last two centuries of progress and perfectibility? Two centuries hence, will our posterity admire the choice of the present yeomen of Bucks, as we now admire the choice of those who rallied round the great parliamentary hero of the seventeenth century? On a right answer to this question depends much more than the individual glory of Mr. Disraeli.

CHAPTER II.

The year 1826 must be a remarkable one in English annals. In this year Mr. Disraeli first began seriously to evince to the world that another Disraeli, whose race was by his name to be ever recognised, had become a hero to himself, although many years were to elapse before his claims to worship could be admitted by the thoughtless public. He was then an aspiring youth, out of the teens certainly by at least a year, but of his exact age, there have been contradictory statements, as there are of the ages of many great men. The chosen field for the exercise of his precocious talents is understood to have been a daily newspaper.

The first number of the 'Representative' appeared on January the 25th, a few days before Parliament assembled for the session. The

'Representative' was of opinion, as its first number informed its readers, that this was a most important crisis in our affairs. The new luminary professed Tory principles and abominated the Roman Catholic agitation. This agitation, however, could not be the alarming symptom of January 1826; for the editor of the 'Representative' in this first number took care to give an admirable specimen of his political prescience, a faculty which Mr. Disraeli said and wrote much about in future years, by declaring "that the Catholic question, to the best of our observation and judgment, has retrograded *prodigiously* of late." Some politicians, like Dominie Sampson, are always shouting out, Prodigious! The word "prodigiously" in this prophecy of the 'Representative' is italicised by the editor himself, that all people might take note of his prodigious sagacity. In two years after this, the Catholic question had made such progress, although the 'Representative' did not live to see it, that even the stubborn Toryism of half a century embodied in the hero of Waterloo, was obliged to concede the claims of the Irish demagogues, and surrender at discretion.

But the organ of Mr. Disraeli's precocity went much farther than merely to oppose the admission of Roman Catholics into parliament. In

all its numbers it bewailed the downfal of the penal code. It doubted "whether the statesman did wisely who preferred, in demolishing that iron code in Ireland, the gratification of the bigotry or vanity of a generation or two to the permanent interest, the real good of a people." How surprising it is to see what philanthropic professions are made by persecutors! There was philanthropy, according to the 'Representative' in that abominable system of oppression such as no other country has ever so continuously enforced, and which made the Irish people hewers of wood and drawers of water to a nest of political jobbers. On the 3rd of July, after the 'Representative' had been in existence five months, and when, notwithstanding its prodigious precocity and persecuting philanthropy, it was drawing to the end of its mortal career, it delivered itself of this great paradox which was the forerunner of many other singular opinions about English politics: "England has been reproached for governing Ireland on too despotic principles; in our humble opinion she has all along, or at least with few exceptions, erred in precisely the opposite direction." Even on the day of its death, when periodicals, like human beings, might naturally be supposed to breathe a gentler spirit, the very last moan of the 'Representative'

was for the penal code. It died on July 29th of the year of its birth, and, it must be added, was not much regretted, nor did it deserve to be regretted except for the immense pecuniary loss, which has been reported at 20,000, 30,000, and even 40,000 pounds, to the pocket of its spirited proprietor.

The history of the 'Representative,' could it be now written, would not only make Isaac Disraeli's two great works much more interesting, but perhaps enliven with some singular anecdotes the life of his son. It was evidently intended to be a Tory rival to the 'Times.' It opposed the great reforms which that newspaper then advocated, and which the present generation has seen successfully carried out; but what it had to recommend it, except its Tory opinions, it would be difficult to imagine. The 'Representative' had certainly none of the genuine Anglicism which has so powerfully contributed to make the 'Times' the great English organ of opinion which it undoubtedly is.

What Mr. Disraeli's connexion with the 'Representative' was, it would perhaps be presumptuous to inquire further. It is necessary to remember however that he was then a Tory, and would seem to have been an intense admirer of all the men and measures of which he was some

eighteen years afterwards the most bitter satirist.

England in 1826 was beginning to shake off that torpor into which she had fallen after the triumph of the great king-making victory. Reaction against constitutional principles had had its period, and the people were bent on knowing something more about national principles than their rulers, in their affected horror of revolutions, and not very disinterested admiration of glorious victories, believed them capable of, or than even these ministers themselves could comprehend. The world was rolling on, it appeared, even after the battle of Waterloo. With the progress of years those great questions which our governors in their profound wisdom expected to be indefinitely postponed, pressed more and more upon the consideration of the country. Revolution, when Burke first denounced it, was a blind and bloody monster worthy of all his execration. But what in the mouth of Burke were great universal principles, in the mouths of Perceval, Liverpool, and Sidmouth were the mere childish ravings of idiotic inanity. These men, who professed to venerate Burke, forgot that when he warned England most earnestly against the principles of the French Revolution, he was most anxious to have the Roman Catholic question settled, that he severely and justly condemned the time-

serving policy of Pitt and Dundas, denounced with bitter irony the selfish conduct of the continental sovereigns, and prophesied that all Europe to its latest posterity would rue the partition of Poland. But of all the great principles of high policy, or of anything else but the mere official requirements of the hour, the ministers who really thought they governed the country for some years after the battle of Waterloo were entirely neglectful.

The dawn of a happier period was at this time announcing itself. To be sure there is little to be admired in the commercial manias, the art manias, and the literary manias then so prevalent. The Sybarite George the Fourth in his pavilion at Brighton was the true hero of this old official Toryism. This Toryism, without a single noble or elevating sentiment, combining in itself the corruption of the first Georges with the prodigality of the last Stuarts was, with the exception of that of Bolingbroke, the worst school of conservatism ever known. But now, as we look back on that time, we see how in the reign of that red-tape Toryism with its revolutionary bugbears, Protestant Constitutions, Pittisms, and would-be Burkeisms, Byronisms, and Brummellisms, there was something brighter and better beginning to be appreciated.

When a young and aspiring genius of two-

and-twenty writes in this year his first elaborate work, what should we naturally expect its pages to contain? When this young genius, some years later, undertakes to be a political regenerator, and affects to be considered the prophet of some higher and better Toryism than England had been accustomed to during what he terms the era of mediocrity, would it not be at least anticipated that his first great work published in this season of enthusiasm, devotion, loyalty, and love, would be peculiarly elevating and ennobling? It might be too poetical and imaginative for such a practical and prosaic age; it might breathe a spirit too exalted, and a fervour too glowing to gain the sympathies of stern maturity; but we might well pardon such blemishes, if blemishes they are, in the first work of a young author, as we pardon, for all its ardour and generosity, the little extravagances of a first youthful love. Bright and happy period of authorship! Bright and happy period of youth! The young author offering to the world the first production of his genius, and the young lover kneeling at the feet of his first idol are inseparably associated in the mind. All is imagination, all is glory to the young author. His heart is pure, his mind is imbued with all the glorious wisdom of the mighty sages of

mankind, no doubts nor difficulties have yet confronted him, the sun shines everywhere upon his path, he is not of the world, nor worldly, he has a noble soul, and must write nobly. With these ideas in our minds, let us then ponder on the first brilliant production of Mr. Disraeli.

It is entitled 'Vivian Grey,' and appears to have been dashed off immediately after the failure of the 'Representative.' Genius is thus seen recovering from defeat; Antæus is rebounding from the earth. All ambitious authors and politicians should know that glory does not consist in never falling, but in rising after every fall.

Mr. Vivian Grey is the son of an eminent author, who never troubles himself about politics, seldom looks into a newspaper, and is entirely devoted to his books. The old gentleman is in comfortable independent circumstances; he leaves his son in boyhood entirely to his mother, and only hopes that "the urchin will never scribble." Vivian Grey's character soon develops itself; he becomes a dandy, and stipulates that he shall not be sent to Rugby, "it is so devilish blackguard." This difficulty about his education is at length overcome by the hopeful son being sent to a private establishment. At his first appearance he makes a complete revolution. He becomes the most popular fellow in the

school, his English compositions excite the envy and the admiration of his companions, and he undertakes the management of private theatricals, though they are strictly forbidden. One of the ushers, a race of beings for whom the young genius has a great antipathy, prejudices the mind of the reverend gentleman at the head of the establishment against Vivian, who is at length denounced as a dangerous stranger, and is shunned by nearly all the school.

During the next half year, he becomes friendly with his old enemy, the usher Mallet, in order to betray him; a conspiracy is formed among the boys, the usher is roasted, but Vivian is expelled. He then spends a very creditable period at home, invades his mother's drawing-room at the most unseasonable hours in lexicons and green slippers, studies Plato, and even determines to master the later Platonists. Mr. Horace Grey, the father, awakes apparently for the first time to the consciousness of his son's existence, asks him what good the later Platonists would do him, makes two or three severe allusions to the great philosopher himself, and induces the student at length to study modern literature. Vivian then reads history and politics, and grows very speedily, according to himself, a matured politician,

who worships what Mr. Disraeli calls Intellect. He forms a resolution to govern men by humouring their prejudices and pandering to their passions. His theory is, and it is called a new theory, that philosophers have died in garrets, statesmen have never ruled, and warriors have never conquered, simply because they did not mix with the herd, and take upon them the weaknesses of humanity. "Mankind, then," says Vivian, "is my great game. At this moment how many a powerful noble wants only wit to be a Minister; and what wants Vivian Grey to attain the same end? That noble's influence. When two persons can so materially assist each other, why are they not brought together? Shall I, because my birth baulks my fancy, shall I pass my life a moping misanthrope in an old château? Supposing I am in contact with this magnifico, am I prepared? Now let me probe my very soul. Does my cheek blench? I have the mind for the conception, and I can perform right skilfully upon the most splendid of musical instruments, the human voice, to make these conceptions believed by others. There wants but one thing more—*courage*, pure, perfect courage; and does Vivian Grey know fear? He laughed an answer of bitterest derision."

He was intended for Oxford, but to talk of Oxford to one with such sentiments, was, he says, an insult. He sought his father, and assured him that he could not bear to be thrown back when society was so active, and there were so many openings to the adventurous and the bold. The old author replied by giving his son some judicious advice, such as there can be no doubt was really given by a literary gentleman to his son, and which it would have been well if Vivian Grey, and perhaps some other person, had taken. "Vivian," said Mr. Grey, "beware of endeavouring to be a great man in a hurry. One such attempt in ten thousand may succeed;—there are fearful odds. Admirer as you are of Lord Bacon, you may perhaps remember a certain parable of his, called 'Memnon, or a youth too forward.' I hope you are not going to be one of these sons of Aurora, who, puffed up with the glittering show of vanity and ostentation, attempt actions above their strength."

An opportunity was, however, soon offered to Vivian for putting his theory into practice, and it was eagerly seized by the beardless Machiavelli. The Marquis of Carabas was a discarded statesman, who in former days had attained by his votes and influence, the dignity of a cabinet

minister. When the administration could do without him he was discarded. Being desirous of filling the chair of the president of the Royal Society, he made a diplomatic visit to Mr. Horace Grey, whose vote was given against him on a former occasion. Vivian was thus introduced to the Marquis, and by flattering all the peer's fooleries, became his especial favourite. He sought the used-up statesman; and the public are expected to believe that this young man of eighteen or nineteen inspired the old intriguer with the ambition of forming a party, and becoming prime minister. Vivian then became the Marquis of Carabas's man, talked upon every subject, and made himself agreeable to all great people. His success was most astonishing. He gave the Marquis receipts for making tomahawk punch, doctored the Marchioness's poodle, duped the marquis's clever and designing daughter-in-law, the Honourable Mrs. Felix Lorraine, made himself a favourite with all the personages who were the pawns in the great game of chess which he and his Marquis were to play against all England, caused the sons of the great nobles to fall in love with whom he pleased to point out, was the rage of all the daughters, and was even idolized by stout yeomen, and hard-worked professional solicitors.

What could not Vivian Grey achieve? were not all the world his dupes? He knew everything; he beat scientific professors in their own science; he turned veteran politicians round his little finger. And all this time he was so destitute of the "bearded majesty" of statesmen that the Honourable Mrs. Felix Lorraine says to him one fine morning, when he had risen early, "Oh, what a pretty morning gown that is!—and how nice your hair curls!—and that velvet stock!—why I declare you've quite a taste in costume!—but it does not sit quite right—*there*, that's better," continued the lady, adjusting the stock for him, "not much beard yet, I see; you must take care to have one before you're a Privy Councillor."

Vivian, although he might allow clever ladies to take liberties with him, was very far from being intimate and good-tempered with everybody. Quite the contrary. He asked himself, "Who is to be my enemy to-morrow?" He was too cunning to be on terms of friendship with people who could do him no service. In one of his triumphal hours he delivers himself of this portentous maxim, which was to do more than all the ridiculous nonsense about principles to acquire influence and respect among men. That the "new generation" might pay more

attention to this elevating sentiment, Mr. Disraëli printed it in capitals. It may perhaps remind some people of the italicised prophecy of the editor of the 'Representative,' "'*A smile for a friend and a sneer for the world* is the way to govern mankind,' and such was the motto of Vivian Grey." Byron talked of being a very Timon at nineteen; but what is a Timon at nineteen, to a Machiavelli at nineteen?

Vivian Grey accomplished what not even Machiavelli could have done. There was a certain disappointed politician of the most brilliant genius, and of the highest principles, living far from the bustle of political life in a cottage among the Welsh mountains. He was the direct contrast to Vivian; for while this young hero had been precociously convinced of the necessity of managing mankind, Frederick Cleveland was entirely destitute of worldly knowledge, and as simple as a child. This was the person indicated as the proper leader of the Carabas party; but the Marquis had betrayed him, and was so terrified at the mere mention of his name, that he declared him to be a personification of Satan. A leader was however indispensable, and Vivian undertook to gain over Frederick Cleveland. Mr. Grey indeed was in his own opinion fully capable of leading this or any other

party; that young gentleman not being at all doubtful of his own qualifications; for though he was at that age when society does not consider a young man responsible for the duties of ordinary life, yet he had already attained such a degree of confidence in himself that what Sydney Smith said with more wit than justice of an experienced minister might most justly be said of Vivian: he was quite ready to find out the longitude, perform the operation of cutting for the stone, or command the Channel fleet at a moment's notice. But still Vivian Grey could not do every thing, and older heads were thought necessary by even the idiot Lord Courtown. And here it is requisite to point out a slight anachronism of the author and his brilliant hero. Mr. Vivian Grey speaks of entering the House and commencing his political life by addressing that assembly. Lord Courtown reminds the meeting that although Mr. Grey might be capable of leading the party in the House of Commons, he was as yet untried. The Marquis shouted that Vivian could do anything; and the young aspirant modestly declared himself ready to follow any leader who could play his part in a becoming manner. But Vivian Grey's adorers, himself, and Mr. Disraeli all appear to have forgotten that the youthful diplomatist certainly could not be the mouth-

piece of the party, for he was only eighteen or at the most nineteen years of age, and all ambitious young politicians must wait until they are twenty-one before they can become members of Parliament and have the least prospect of leading grey-headed statesmen. Not even Machiavelli, not even Vivian Grey, could annihilate space and time and convert eighteen into twenty-one.

But this is nothing to Vivian's promise that Cleveland should be drinking the Marquis's health, at his own table, in ten days. The juvenile intriguer immediately sets off for Wales without any letter of introduction; and we are told that even Cleveland, the high-minded, the generous, the accomplished, the man whom nobody could lead, the man who lived at a German University for many years without smoking a meerschaum, and who among Anglo-Italians could never be mistaken for anything but an Englishman, this man, the most inflexible of human beings, was induced to be the dupe of Vivian Grey and once more the tool of the Marquis of Carabas. Frederick Cleveland does sit at the Marquis's table. Vivian redeems his pledge. But there are other intriguers besides Vivian Grey. Mrs. Felix Lorraine, having been repulsed by Cleveland as she knelt at his feet, endeavours to prejudice the Marquis against

him and Vivian. She also attempts to poison Vivian on his hinting to her his knowledge of the humiliation she had undergone. Then he breaks out into a strange kind of soliloquy: "I fancy that in this mysterious foreigner I have met a kind of *double* of myself. And is it possible that I am like her? that I resemble her? Oh God! the system of my existence seems to stop. I cannot breathe; am I then an intellectual Don Juan, reckless of human minds as he was of human bodies—a spiritual libertine? Poison! Oh God! Oh God! Away with all fear—all repentance—all thought of past—all reckoning of future. And now, thou female fiend! the battle is to the strongest; and I see right well that the struggle between two such spirits will be a long and fearful one. Woe, I say, to the vanquished! You must be dealt with by arts which even yourself cannot conceive. Your boasted knowledge of human nature shall not again stand you in stead; for mark me, from henceforward Vivian Grey's conduct towards you shall have no precedent in human nature."

Such are some of the choice sentences of this soliloquy. Mrs. Felix Lorraine goes to visit the Courtowns. The Marquis loses his sinecure: Lord Courtown gets it; Vivian is dismissed with

indignation by his patron, and struck by Cleveland. He kills both Mrs. Felix Lorraine and Cleveland; the one by telling lies to her until she bursts a blood vessel, and the other by a random shot in a duel which was the consequence of the blow Vivian had received. The hero falls into a dreadful fever, from which he slowly recovers by the care of his parents, and is about to travel for the good both of his body and mind.

This is an unexaggerated outline of Mr. Disraeli's first work. This is the high-toned, impassioned, and most elevating first production of this young author as his mind opens to the world, in the bright morning of existence. Its crudities as a work of art, may be passed over on account of youth; but what excuse can be offered for its immoralities? Vivian Grey is in the strictest sense an immoral work both in conception and in execution. It is truly, in politics, what Don Juan is in poetry; but even Byron, at two and twenty, would not have written the immoralities of Don Juan. All the ridiculous Byronical Werterisms of the book may only be laughed at; but the strange disregard of all that is good and noble indicated throughout its pages, is a singular and even painful phenomenon. Like everything that is immoral it is essentially false; intrigue is not

statesmanship; cleverness is not intellect. This is the great mistake Mr. Disraeli makes even in those passages of the work that are intended to be grand. Vivian Grey does not, whatever Mr. Disraeli may say, adore intellect: he worships only himself, and mistakes the promptings of conceit for the inspirations of a high intellect.

Some few words deserve to be said about the new theory, the grand discovery, that "wisdom ought to be concealed under folly, and consistency under caprice." When it is asserted as an unquestionable truth that intellect is power, it is necessary to ask, what is intellect? and what is power? Vivian Grey's clever intrigues are not very remarkably intellectual, nor is the momentary ascendency which they acquired to him worthy of being called power. Philosophers, it is true, have died in garrets; but the philosopher in his garret may perhaps be more powerful, in the true meaning of the word, than in a palace. Galileo, in his dungeon, was more powerful than the Cardinals who lived in their sumptuous dwellings. "Why have there been poets whose only admirers have been Nature in her echoes?" The greatest admirer a true poet can have is Nature; it is only because she smiles upon him that he can write a truly great poem; her admiration is in the end the sure passport to the

admiration of the world. "Why have there been statesmen who have never ruled?" A true statesman will be sure to rule; all the shouting egotists in the world will not prevent him from ruling; he will rule even in his grave. Our greatest statesmen have ruled, not by being prime ministers, not by being enthusiastically applauded in their day, but by influencing indirectly the puppets in high places, and having their suggestions adopted by others. "Why have there been heroes who never conquered?" It is not necessary that a hero should always be a conqueror; but it is indispensable that he should always lead a heroic life. Hence, of all the sophistries ever written, to say that a hero "must mix with the herd, humour their weaknesses, sympathise with the sorrows he does not feel, and share the merriment of fools," is the most miserable. To be a hero, he must, according to Mr. Disraeli, first become unheroic, to be a strong man he must first become a weak one, to be a good man he must first become a bad one, to be a wise man he must first become a fool.

Vivian Grey continues his reasoning on this subject; and of all the impious doctrines propounded by a youth of one or two and twenty, the following quotation perhaps contains the most impious. "I have been often struck by

the tales of Jupiter's visits to the earth. In these fanciful adventures the God bore no indication of the thunderer's glory, but was a man of low estate, a herdsman, or other hind, and often even a mere animal. A mighty spirit has in tradition, Time's great moralist, perused 'the wisdom of the ancients.' Even in the same spirit I would explain Jove's terrestrial visitings. For to govern men, even the God appeared to feel as a man; *and sometimes, as a beast, was apparently influenced by their vilest passions.*"

"Apparently influenced by their vilest passions!" And so the gross ideas which the ancients entertained of the attributes of the Supreme Being, and which it is the great glory of Christianity to have extirpated, are to be brought into a novel, in the nineteenth century, as a justification of Vivian Grey's unprincipled career. When our Saviour assumed the human form, could all the malignity of the Jews ever accuse him of flattering the passions of the multitude? Was he ever apparently influenced by the vilest of their passions? The very idea is horrible and must shock the sentiments of every religious person. Our Divine Master's whole life was a protest against worldly intellect, worldly governing, and worldly glory. Vivian Grey's doctrines are abominable and devilish.

Youth can be no excuse for errors of this nature, because they are errors of that kind which youth instinctively shuns. There is nothing in them of the romantic, the noble, the generous. There is much pertness, but not earnestness, cleverness, but not highmindedness. Men of the world have indulged in this vein of self-sufficient coxcombry; and great men in their old age have become misanthropes. But Chesterfield at twenty-two would not have declared there was no virtue in the world, nor was Swift in his younger days the fierce misanthrope he at length became.

Vivian Grey is imbued with all that is bad both in Chesterfield and Swift, without any of their redeeming qualities. Yet strange to say, there are now and then indications in the novel that the hero was intended for a magnanimous character. The episode of John Connyers' distress, in which Vivian even lights the fire in the poor man's grate and exerts his precocious diplomacy in this cottager's favour, was evidently intended as something eminently striking and high-souled. At the conclusion of the two volumes also, when Vivian is sent upon his travels, it would seem as though the author regarded his hero's crimes as some amiable indiscretions which the reader would gently smile at, and regret. What other interpretation can be given to the concluding

address? Mr. Disraeli says in this last sentence of his remarkable production, "I fear me much that Vivian Grey is a lost man; but I am sure that every sweet and gentle spirit who has read this sad story of his fortunes, will breathe a holy prayer this night for his restoration to society and himself."

Such is 'Vivian Grey.' Surely it is a very singular production for a young political regenerator. The world was then before Mr. Disraeli. He had been early initiated into the mysteries of literature and politics. The clever son of a literary man, and the precocious contributor to a daily newspaper, may soon acquire a superficial knowledge of society; and if he be blessed with inordinate self-esteem, he may at once believe that there is nothing in the world but what appears on the surface. Mr. Disraeli must have learnt, as soon as he was out of petticoats, to prattle about Quarterly Reviews and fashionable novels, and to tell anecdotes of Scott and Byron. By putting a few of these interesting but common-place circumstances in 'Vivian Grey,' and writing of the literary and political tattle of drawing-rooms, he soon found that his dialogues became remarkably sparkling and personal, with-

out any very extraordinary abundance of wit or humour. Besides, it was easy to gratify in this manner, little dislikes that the young genius entertained for eminent personages; and Mr. Disraeli, it is evident even then, had begun to have some very decided hatreds; and no hatred is so unscrupulous as that of a vain man who believes himself a great but neglected genius. Thus, to give free scope at once to his wit and malice, in an evil hour for himself, for his future fame, and perhaps for English morality, Mr. Disraeli determined to be satirical; and without the least hesitation introduced living persons into the pages of this novel which he was so determined to make captivating. He had even at that time singled out a prominent Tory politician, who is said by Vivian Grey to be as sublime a genius as himself; and it is added that when the two gentlemen meet there will be a very striking interview. But he supposed, with the presumption of youth, that Mr. Croker was the double of himself, and entertained the same dislike of the literary champion of Toryism as one individual proverbially entertains to another of the same trade.

This novel of 'Vivian Grey' created a sensation,

and thus one great desire of its author was gratified. The work might be immoral, it might be personal, and, in a literary point of view, commonplace; but still it created a sensation, and Mr. Disraeli's darling ambition at all times is to create a sensation. For this he satirises his friends; for this he raises up against him enemies innumerable; for this he disregards the sober but majestic features of truth and nature. On more than one occasion he has declared through the mouths of his heroes, that it is better to be spoken of with detestation than not to be spoken of at all, and that infamy is preferable to obscurity. People certainly did talk about 'Vivian Grey,' and its author enjoyed heartily the very scandal he had occasioned.

Here was a highly ingenuous and ardent mind publishing a novel in which it was evident some of the author's intentions were foreshadowed. Such a thing as a moral principle was not even supposed in this work to exist. The motto on the title-page indicated the contents of the two volumes. The peculiar idiosyncracy of the young aspirant induced him to picture a juvenile political Iago, and, "The world is mine oyster, which I with sword

will open," was the noble and chivalrous maxim which our young knight of the nineteenth century emblazoned upon his shield, as he set out on his grand crusade amid the pomposities, the solemn plausibilities, the wild revolutionary agitations, and the stern, stubborn conservatisms of the year eighteen hundred and twenty-six. The world is before him. Strange scenes await him. Whither will this Vivian Greyism conduct him? and what will be his fate? He visits strange countries, as the great champions of the middle ages were wont to do. He wanders about the Rhine, stands upon the Swiss mountains, and rapturously surveys Venice, where his forefathers bought and sold. He goes even into the East, and meditates upon his future career and upon the fortunes of his race in Syria and the Holy Land.

But he had not quite done with Vivian Grey. A year after the two first volumes were published, three additional volumes appeared under the same title. Yet all the resemblance they bear to their predecessors is in the name; for in other respects they are essentially different. They are full of adventures and incidents, and were evidently penned in imitation of those

novels on art, which Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister' rendered so very fashionable. The second part of 'Vivian Grey' has no plot, and scarcely any original characters. The scenes are laid in Germany, and the spirit of the work, so far as it has any spirit, must remind every reader of the German school of novels, combined with that of the English travelling romances written by young ladies who spend a few months on the Continent. This second part of 'Vivian Grey' is undoubtedly the most unreadable of Mr. Disraeli's works. These later volumes have, however, one merit in which the earlier are deficient; there is nothing immoral in them, and Vivian Grey is quite pious, modest, and well-behaved. It may perhaps be found on a general survey of Mr. Disraeli's works, that a certain laxity in morality is indispensable for the display of his sarcastic vivacity; and that when he tries to be very moral, he is generally very dull.

The fact is, he had become somewhat ashamed of the plain-spokenness of his intellectual Reuben. This first-born had a disagreeable, but certainly a most striking air of sincerity, even amid all its flippancies and conceits. Thus, it

has one charm, which is characteristic of every great production; and whatever may be the destiny of Mr. Disraeli's other novels, this book will always be studied in connection with his singular career. 'Vivian Grey' is, unintentionally, what 'Contarini Fleming,' notwithstanding its pretensions, is not, "a psychological romance;" and as such it will remain a most curious production. If, in all his future compositions and speeches, it is found that Mr. Disraeli carefully avoids the most serious faults of these two volumes, shuns all malignities and personalities, and in his political conduct ever afterwards preserves an intelligible consistency, it may with some plausibility be asserted that Vivian Grey is entirely a fictitious character, and that it is unfair to associate the author with his work. But what conclusion can any impartial person come to, if we find him in his matured novels and speeches, still dealing in personalities, and scarcely anything else but personalities; still making use in one year of Radical principles, and in another, appealing to old Tory traditions; at one time being the advocate of free trade, and at another of protection, and only consistent in a furious desire to

become distinguished? Would it then be going beyond the bounds of fair critical induction, if the names of Vivian Grey and Benjamin Disraeli were considered as synonymous?

CHAPTER III.

AMID the charming scenery of the Rhine, the glaciers of Switzerland, the sunny plains of Italy, the romantic desolations of Spain, the oriental imagery of Turkey, and the holy associations of Palestine, Mr. Disraeli appears for a moment to have awakened from his dreams of worldly ambition, and to have felt some purer and nobler aspirations. He looked back on his Vivian Greyism as upon a feverish vision. He blushed at the ridiculous rawness of many of its early pages. He was treading, too, on grounds that were hallowed by the Caucasian race from which he was descended. The past spoke to him; the future was all bright in his imagination; and he became disgusted with much of his former life.

His mind expanded. His better nature for a moment triumphed over his egotism and vanity. He was endowed with much imagination, much ardour, much ambition. He was of the Hebrew race; but still born in England, and yearning for many of the glittering prizes of English life. Thus, in this young man there was a union of very strange imaginings. As he stood upon the Rialto at Venice, he remembered that his great-grandfather had been a Venetian merchant, and that the Lares were his kinsmen. As he wandered among the scenery of the East, he reflected that in his veins also flowed oriental blood, and that he was not altogether at home amid all the Norman and Anglo-Saxon civilization of Europe. As he entered Jerusalem, and mused and meditated on that soil, every step of which is consecrated, a still small voice whispered to him, "Thou also art a Jew; thou also art of that favoured race, and superior to all those dull, stupid English, who despise thy people, from whom they have borrowed their religion." As he read a newspaper, however, even amid all the glories of Israel, his Vivian Greyism returned. English society was stirred to its depths; the old Toryism of George the Third and George the Fourth was at its last

gasp; and the wild cry of Reform even reached the ears of young Disraeli as he was aspiring to be the Hebrew poet of his time. Thus he was at one moment a Jew, at another a Gentile; at one moment an oriental poet, and at another a Radical politician; at one time the great leader of the modern Hebrews, at another a Venetian exile; at one time a patriotic prophet, at another a Vivian Grey.

Amid all these characteristic changes, there was some sincerity; for the young man, though not a profound thinker, or that of which profound thought is the natural consequence, a very earnest nature, had a remarkable degree of ingenuous ardour, and would have made an excellent Italian *improvisatore*. Even Vivian Grey himself had a remarkable habit of improvising quotations. The character Mr. Disraeli performed for the moment was sure to be his favourite character. Whatever he undertook, he set about with a will. If he did not care much for any cause, he cared much for himself, and was at all times to be glorious and great. He could never see his own errors or absurdities until they had produced unpleasant consequences; for perhaps no human creature that ever lived was endowed with more self-

confidence than this singular being. Everybody knows that prophecy about Robespierre, "This man will go far, for he believes every word he says;" Mr. Disraeli believed in something better than words, he believed most devoutly in himself; and when people were laughing at his absurdities, they little knew how far this belief in himself would conduct him. He has never been altogether a ludicrous object except when he believed himself a poet.

It was at this period when his imagination was excited by the new scenes in his travels that he mistook his ardour for metrical inspiration. This is, therefore, the time for considering him in his new capacity. From 'Vivian Grey' to poetry, is, indeed, a curious transition; but Mr. Disraeli has made other transitions that are quite as curious. But he was not satisfied even with being a poet; he was at once to be a poet and a psychologist, and thus combine in his own person the honours of a Shakespeare and a Locke. Mr. Disraeli was always meditating great ideas, always determining to be a great originator; but notwithstanding his daring attempts to expound a new political creed, notwithstanding his bold endeavours to be the great financial reformer of this eminently financial

age, it is but justice to him to acknowledge that the most extraordinary scheme he ever undertook to execute successfully, was this of writing a great poetical autobiography. Even the mysteries of Toryism, even the mysteries of finance, are but simple problems when compared with the mysteries of predisposition. But to expound the mysteries of predisposition, to trace the development and formation of the poetic character, was now the task of the author of 'Vivian Grey.' For such an undertaking two mighty qualifications are indispensable. The author must be both a great poet, and a great metaphysician. But supposing him to be neither poet nor metaphysician, what kind of book, on such a subject, must he be expected to produce? This work, which Mr. Disraeli then commenced, was not only to be a psychological autobiography, not only was the poetic character to be psychologically developed, but the book was to be, as the author takes care to tell his readers in the first chapter, "a book that should be all truth," a work "of which the passion, the thought, the action, and even the style, should spring from my own experience of feeling, from the meditations of my own intellect, from my own observation of incident, from my

own study of the genius of expression." Cadmus, when he invented letters, Homer, when he was composing the first great epic, could scarcely have said more than Mr. Disraeli did when he set about writing on the great subject which he supposed to be "virgin in the imaginative literature of every country."

It was evidently a very great effort, and one which was to establish the pretensions of its author to be a great poet, thinker, and metaphysician. The peculiar history of this new hero is indeed that of Mr. Disraeli, with, of course, some modifications. Contarini's mother was a Venetian lady, his father a Saxon nobleman, who had risen to eminence as a statesman in a northern kingdom. The boy lost his mother on the day of his birth, his father married a daughter of his adopted country, and Venice ever remained a name to be shunned. His stepmother gave birth to two sons, who were called Contarini's brothers; but nature gave the assertion the lie; for they, with their blue eyes, flaxen hair, and pale faces, were evidently natives of the north, while Contarini was as plainly the child of a more southern clime. The blood of Venice had little sympathy with the blood of Scandinavia. Thus early were

the ideas about race present to Mr. Disraeli's mind.

The childhood of Contarini was silent and moody; his tutor believed him stupid; he was ever alone, indulging his fancy, and feeling with horror that he was different from the boys with whom he was surrounded. The theatre became his delight, for thus he saw human life more beautiful, earnest, and natural than it appeared even in his own imagination. But a dark spirit frequently overshadowed the mind of the little Contarini. Then everything was changed; all was dull and insipid; the boy was lifeless and lost.

At school his energies were awakened; he became witty and sarcastic, and formed a boyish friendship which he hoped would be eternal. His friend came to see him after some weeks' absence, and Contarini was ashamed of him; the young genius found that it was his own creation, and not his friend that he had adored. He treated his old associate therefore somewhat rudely, and became again a solitary wanderer. At length, as one vision succeeded to another, Contarini began to think himself a poet. He attempted composition, but was soon disgusted with his creations. Now he was all but desperate. Walking out one day he entered a Roman

Catholic church, and such an effect had the sight of the gorgeous interior upon the susceptible little fellow, that, as the clouds of incense arose, he fell down and worshipped. From that moment he was a Roman Catholic, and a devout admirer of the blessed Magdalen.

"A creed," says Mr. Disraeli, "is imagination." Contarini was now happy. All he desired was to visit Italy, to perform a pilgrimage to Rome, and to "mount the skies with the presiding essence of a star."

Among the ruins of a Gothic abbey, the boy meets a stranger with a hawk nose, gleaming eyes, and an imposing form. The stranger turns out to be a great painter of the name of Winter, and he tells Contarini that the school is only a place for studying words, and not ideas; and shows him drawings of Venice. Contarini determines to study no more, and to go to Venice. He joins some gipsies, and is robbed by a young man whom he believed to be, like himself, a count travelling incognito. In the forest where Contarini is left, he falls in with an old woodman, who conducts the boy to his hut. Winter, the philosophical painter, is found to be the son of the poor labourer, and Contarini, a few days afterwards, recognises the same genius in the

splendid drawing-rooms of his father, with all the politicians and fashionable people of the capital. Contarini goes to the university, becomes gay and dissipated, is reclaimed by attending the lectures of a great professor, sets resolutely to his studies, and writes a prize essay on the Dorians. The father advises his brilliant son to read Voltaire, and the historian of the Dorians becomes a most enthusiastic disciple of the philosopher of Ferney. He is soon after the leader of a band of reckless collegians, and the bust of Voltaire overlooks their deep potations. They form a society of pantisocratists in a forest, but soon degenerate into a band of robbers. Of course Contarini is *their captain*; he is grave when all his followers are *mirthful*; he has the brains for devising all *their* enterprises; at length their exploits are such, that an armed body is sent by the government to discover the brigands. Contarini is all ardour; resistance is hopeless; but they might still exist together as spoilers of society. The leader harangues his followers, and says most eloquently in that style which country gentlemen have at a later period cheered most enthusiastically, "We have ample funds, we can purchase a ship. Mingling with the crew as amateurs, we shall soon gain sufficient science. A new career is

before us. The Baltic leads to the Mediterranean. Think of its blue waters and beaming skies, its archipelagoes and picturesque inhabitants. We have been bandits in a northern forest; let us become pirates on a southern sea!"

From being captain of this confederacy of plunderers, Contarini soon becomes, under the auspices of his parent, a respectable secretary of state, and shows unmistakably his capacity for governing. He also displays his talents as a satcastic assailant of his father's rival, and writes a novel called 'Manstein,' full of personality, and even, as he confesses, malignity. It contains many characters from life most unscrupulously introduced, and produces a terrible effect in society. Contarini, after showing himself a diplomatic equal of the ministers of Austria and Russia, after assisting his father in attaining the summit of state ambition, tires of his ministerial capacity, and sets out upon his travels. Venice is his great centre of attraction. Visions and writings upon walls, all say "You have been long expected;" the influences of animal magnetism even reveal to him the lady of his destiny. He falls in love with the last female representative of his own illustrious house. A poet, a great genius, one who had been long expected, he comes, and sees, and conquers. Here

follows one of his amorous soliloquies, which is of course intended to be striking and instructive to all poets, psychologists, and lovers: "'Thank God!' I exclaimed, 'I am alone. Why do I not die? Betrothed! It is false! She cannot be another's! She is mine! she is my Adrian bride! Destiny has delivered her to me. Why did I pass the Alps? Heaven frowned upon my passage; yet I was expected—I was long expected. Poh! she *is* mine. I would cut her out from the heart of a legion. Is she happy? Her 'heaven is never serene.' Mark that. I will be the luminary to dispel these clouds. Betrothed! Infamous jargon! She belongs to me. Why did I not stab him? Is there ne'er a bravo in Venice that will do the job? Betrothed! What a word! What an infamous—what a ridiculous word! She is mine, and she is betrothed to another! Most assuredly, if she be only to be attained by the destruction of the city, she shall be mine. A host of Delfinis shall not baulk me!

"Now this is no common affair. It shall be done, and it shall be done quickly.* I cannot doubt she loves me. It is as necessary that she should love me as that I should adore her. We

* After Macbeth, who says, in an admired soliloquy, "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly."

are bound together by Fate. We belong to each other: 'I have been long expected.'

"Ah! were these words a warning or a prophecy? Have I arrived too late? Let it be settled at once, this very evening. Suspense is madness. She is mine!—most assuredly she is mine! I will not admit for a moment that she is not mine. That idea cannot exist in my thoughts; it is the end of the world—it is Doomsday for me. Most assuredly she is my Adrian bride—my *bride*, not my *betrothed* merely, but my *bride*.

"Let me be calm. I am calm. I never was calmer in my life. Nothing shall ruffle—nothing shall discompose me. I will have my rights. This difficulty will make our future lives more sweet; we shall smile at it in each other's arms. Grimani Delfini! if there be blood in that name, it shall flow. Rather than another should possess her, she shall herself be sacrificed!—a solemn sacrifice—a sweet and solemn sacrifice—consecrated by my own doom! I would lead her to the altar like Iphigenia. I—

"O, inscrutable, inexorable destiny, which must be fulfilled!—doom that mortals must endure, and cannot direct! Lo! I kneel before thee, and I pray—Let it end! let it end! let it end at once! This suspense is insanity. Is she not mine? Did'st thou not whisper it in the

solitude of the north? did'st thou not confirm it amid the thunder of the Alps? did'st thou not reanimate my drooping courage, even amid this fair city, which I so much love—this land of long and frequent promise? And shall it not be?—Do I exist?—do I breathe, and think, and dare? Am I a man, and a man of strong passions, and deep thoughts? and shall I, like a vile beggar, upon my knees crave the rich heritage that is my own by right? If she be not mine, there is no longer Venice—no longer human existence—no longer a beautiful and everlasting world. Let it all cease; let the whole globe crack and shiver; let all nations and all human hopes expire at once; let chaos come again, if this girl be not my bride!"

This inimitable soliloquy is somewhat lengthy, yet to extract only a part of it, might perhaps have been unjust to its author, and even to the reader. Such is poetry, such is psychology, such is love. The prayer of "Ye gods, annihilate space and time, and make two lovers happy!" is quite a tame ejaculation in comparison with the concluding sentences of Contarini's declamation. Pathos and bathos are most exquisitely combined. It is comforting to find that Contarini did marry his Adrian bride, and was, therefore, the luminary that dispelled these

clouds; that Grimani Delfini was not stabbed; that ne'er a bravo in Venice was hired to "do the job;" that the lady was not led to the altar like Iphigenia, nor the attempt even made; (although, had Contarini wished to conduct her to be sacrificed, she might not have gone;) that Venice still is; that human existence still continues; that there is still a beautiful and everlasting world, though Contarini declared that if he were baulked, this everlasting world should exist no longer; that all has not ceased; that all nations, and all human hopes have not expired at once; that chaos has not come again. But had "the girl not been his bride" chaos would have come, the everlasting world would have existed no longer, the whole globe would have cracked and shivered, and a terrible shivering of timbers there would have been.

We may read over once more a sentence from this fine soliloquy, which, whatever claims may have been made by Mr. Thiers and Mr. Macaulay to some other passages of this author's works, is evidently altogether Mr. Disraeli's. "Grimani Delfini! If there be *blood* in that *name* it shall flow." The question has been often asked, "What's in a name?" It may confidently be answered, "Not blood."

Alcesté dies in childbed, and with her death

the autobiography may fitly be said to conclude, although there is another volume full of Mr. Disraeli's own travels, most inartistically introduced into the work. Contarini's father dies; an autograph letter from the king invites the son to enter His Majesty's service; but the solitary and poetical widower builds a palace at Naples, and meditates there with Winter for his only visitor. He resolves to spend his life in studying and creating the beautiful. Still he feels deeply for his race, and should an opportunity occur, is resolved to assist in its political restoration.

This is a very imperfect, but necessary and indeed indispensable outline of 'Contarini Fleming, or the Psychological Romance.' It is tedious at all times to write a short sketch of a romance, play, or poem; but unless a slight outline is drawn, the criticism on such works would be to some readers almost unintelligible. When the work is not merely a novel or tale, but, as most of Mr. Disraeli's compositions are, of much higher pretensions, it is then absolutely necessary to dwell on those leading features.

The question, on laying down 'Contarini Fleming' is, not only whether it be an interesting tale, but also whether it be a valuable contribution to metaphysical, or psychological science? Is it really the development of the poetic character?

If the author be not himself a poet, it is evident that he could never write the autobiography of a poet; and, therefore, the question merges into the first and most important consideration, is Mr. Disraeli a poet? His intellectual qualifications may be as great as his most ardent admirers suppose; he may be a great novelist, a great psychologist, a great orator, a great statesman, a great financier; but can it be maintained for a moment that he is a great poet? This work is alone sufficient to prove that Mr. Disraeli's organisation is essentially unpoetical, and that he is not a man of meditation, but of action. He is one of those who love to jostle for pre-eminence in the crowd, and not one of those who muse, and meditate, and create. Whenever he attempts to draw imaginary characters, whenever he would picture to our minds anything highly spiritual, he becomes ridiculous. His strength lies in the prosaic and the real. The best sketches in his novels are all of living persons, and are not great creations.

In this 'Contarini Fleming,' the work which is expressly intended to be poetical, there is no great creation to be found. No young poet ever wrote about love in the style of the soliloquy just quoted. It would be difficult to point out in the writings of any other author of admitted ability,

such an affected piece of bombast and extravagance. Passion is torn to rags. It is from beginning to end nothing but declamation at once hyperbolical and commonplace.

Contarini must act. He must ever be the observed of all observers. He must ever be the leader of every undertaking. The women in the drawing-rooms must admire him; the ambassadors of the great powers must tremble before him; his sarcasm must be withering, his vengeance must be terrible as death; nought must escape his eagle eye; even Winter, the mighty painter, must hail Contarini a mighty poet. And this is thought poetry!

The two volumes of 'Vivian Grey,' the first production of this would-be-poetical author, were not very poetical. If they had any merit at all, it consisted in their callous and flippant worldliness. They were the very antithesis of poetry. The work called 'Manstein,' was evidently intended for Mr. Disraeli's 'Vivian Grey.' He had then become ashamed of it; but his penitence is not edifying. It is there excused on account of the author's education, which was directly opposed to his character. If we were to credit the apologetic observations in 'Contarini Fleming,' it would appear that it was the very nobleness of his nature that caused him to write 'Manstein,'

alias 'Vivian Grey,' and that we see in the reprehensible volumes nature triumphing over education, poetry over art, good over evil. The influence of a beautiful and virtuous woman, whom he had known and loved in childhood, ennobled Contarini's feelings, invigorated his intellect, and called forth the latent poetry of his being. He saw a youth, who like himself, in this cold wilderness of a world, had stifled the breathing forms of his creation, and looked back mournfully at "the bright gates of the sweet garden of fancy that he had forfeited." There was a deep struggle between his genius and his fate, but his prophetic mind burst through the thousand fetters that had been forged so cunningly to bind the inspiration of his nature, and the beneficent demon who will not desert those who struggle to be wise and good, tore back the curtain of the future; "and I beheld," says the hero, "seated upon a glorious throne on a proud Acropolis, *one* to whom a surrounding and enthusiastic people offered a laurel crown. I laboured to catch the fleeting features and the changing countenance of him who sat upon the throne. Was it the strange youth, or was it indeed myself?" Contarini jumped out of bed, as he well might. He asked himself soberly whether he had indeed seen a vision, or

whether it were but the invisible phantom of an ecstatic reverie?

What did the young genius do after this vision or ecstatic reverie; he whose heart, as by the first rains upon a Syrian soil, had been refreshed, and recurred to its nature; he whose youthful visions had returned in all their might and their splendour; whose prophetic mind had become clear; whose beneficent demon had torn back the curtain of the future; who, as an invisible phantom in an ecstatic reverie, had been offered a laurel crown? This was the time for the poetic genius to show itself. Now were all bad passions to be subdued, and all the artificial follies of life to shrink before poetry and truth. Did the poet Contarini then produce some great heroic poem? He retired to his stepmother's garden-house, and composed 'Manstein.' Instead of a lofty epic, he produced two volumes of personalities and malignities, of which he was himself afterwards heartily ashamed. This is the triumph of the better nature? It is for such a glorious production that an enthusiastic people is to offer in an ecstatic vision a laurel crown. Ah, Contarini Fleming! dreams and visions go by contraries. It is not a laurel crown that you deserve for such intellectual achievements. Yes! dreams and visions go by

contraries. Not for sarcastic personalities will you be elevated—at least, on a proud Acropolis.

Contarini indulges much in visions, which are all intended to be extremely poetical, and certainly, if poetry depends, as Mr. Disraeli seems to insinuate, on animal magnetism, such visions may be poetry. It is as Contarini is descending from the Alps and entering Italy, it is as he is approaching his beloved Venice, that all these natural and supernatural agencies are most astonishingly exerted. There can be no question that when Mr. Disraeli in his youthful days first approached the city in which some of his ancestors had become wealthy, and which indeed, can never be approached by any person without emotion, he had much of his hero's enthusiasm. It is nevertheless incredible that, though inclined enough to attribute to himself heroic qualities, he actually had the visions of Contarini, and saw his own portrait and that of his uncle Julius Cæsar hanging on each side of the door of a room full of pictures. Yet, if it were not so, what are we to make of the psychological and poetical vision in the second chapter of the third book of this curious autobiography? Contarini falls asleep, and finds himself in a vast hall full of bearded men in rich dresses. The president from the

council-table raised his head, beckoned to him, extended his hand, and said, with a gracious smile, "You have been long expected." When the council broke up, and the members had dispersed, the president and Contarini entered a small room full of pictures, and, says the psychological poet, "On one side of the door was a portrait of Julius Cæsar, and on the other, one of myself. And my guide turned his head, and pointing to the paintings, said, 'You see you have been long expected. There is a great resemblance between you and your uncle.'" Mr. Disraeli has often said that most great men were descended from the Hebrew race; is it then, true, as we may infer from this, that the statue of the great Roman statesman and soldier is numbered among those of the Disraelis, whose race was to be ever recognized?

But there is still more poetry, psychology, and animal magnetism. A beautiful female appeared, with her fair hair reaching down to her waist, and with a melancholy, yet seraphic countenance. She held her crucifix in her hand; and the youthful poet said, "Oh, blessed Magdalen, have you at last returned? I have been long wandering in the wilderness, and methought you had forgotten me. And indeed I am about again to go forth, but heaven frowns upon my pilgrim-

age." She smilingly answered, "Sunshine succeeds storm. You have been long expected." Then the dreamer saw the beautiful city, with its marble palaces, broad canals, and blue waters. He entered a gondola with the president of the Venetian council. And again, on visiting a villa on his road to Venice, he sees the original picture of the beautiful Magdalen, and on the portal of a temple the same mysterious "Enter, you have been long expected," appears before him, and he writes, "If I have been long expected, I have at length arrived. Be you also obedient to the call." But there is another flight of imagination, extraordinary even in the descendant of Julius Cæsar, and the subject of animal magnetism. As he was on the Rialto, thinking how his fathers revelled amid those gorgeous structures, a chorus of priests carrying a saint, and waving banners, passed by him, and they sang,—

> "Wave your banners! Sound, sound your voices! for he has come, he has come! Our Saint and our Lord! He has come, in pride and in glory, to greet with love his Adrian bride."

The writer adds, "It is singular, but these words struck me as applicable to myself." But the poet soon degenerates from the saint to the conspirator. He thinks as the Hungarian drum

beats, that there is something alarming in its hurried note: "I remembered," he says, "that when a boy, sauntering with Musæus, I believed that I had a predisposition for conspiracies, and I could not forget, that of all places in the world, Venice was the one in which I should most desire to find myself a conspirator."

It is impossible in perusing the book not to connect Mr. Disraeli with Contarini Fleming. To make the association more perfect, the author's travelling experiences are most carefully introduced, and the book is boldly declared in the first chapter to be, as it has before been said, but deserves repeating, a book which is "all truth," and of which every thought and incident should spring from real individual experience. Mr. Disraeli must therefore have entertained some of these wonderful visions, or what becomes of this psychological autobiography? If they are not individual experiences, this "book that should be all truth," is a mere romance.

But it may be said, "these visions are poetry." They are certainly intended to be so; but they are not really poetry. They are not remarkably imaginative. This is not the imagination of a Shelley. But then they have also something to do with animal magnetism. How reconcile this animal magnetism and poetry? Which is which?

One sunshiny afternoon the young hero fell asleep in a church. The music ceased and recalled him to self-consciousness. He saw a beautiful female figure kneeling before the altar; and as he gazed upon her a heaviness crept over his frame, and drowsiness stole over his senses. All things moved confusedly together, and he slumbered upon a tomb. A long line of Venetian nobles passed before him, two by two, and saluted him; two doges went by smiling and waving their bonnets. His father followed in a hunting dress, and then changed into the female of the altar.

The lady turns out to be the Adrian bride whom the young poet married. He met her for the first time some months afterwards in a large assembly, and immediately recognized her as the lady of the vision. On inquiring he found that she had only come to Venice a week before their meeting, and certainly could not have been in the church.

Mr. Disraeli avows himself, in commenting on this wonderful incident, a devout believer in animal magnetism; and the vision, the reader is informed, will perhaps at a future time, not be considered the wild delusion of a crack-brained enthusiast. "For myself, I have no doubt that the effect produced upon me by the

lady in the church was a magnetic influence, and that the slumber, which at the moment occasioned me so much annoyance and so much astonishment, was nothing less than a luminous trance."

Since 'Contarini Fleming' was written, this animal magnetic creed has made considerable progress. There is a certain class of minds ready to believe everything that is strange; but it is quite as unphilosophical to disbelieve everything that is strange. It is no reproach therefore, to Mr. Disraeli to have faith in animal magnetism, or in any other *ism* of this enlightened age. But do not let us measure the heavens with our mechanical instruments. Do not let us forget that this spiritualised materialism is, perhaps, more dangerous than the materialism of the last century. Physiology is an excellent auxiliary, but a dreadful master. It is not certainly known whether Mr. Disraeli believes in spirit-rapping and table-moving, but if he continue of the same opinion as when he wrote 'Contarini Fleming,' he ought to be one of the most confident disciples of the new faith. All these things have their course. The tides ebb and flow in defiance of the human will.

But, for the sake of religion as well as of morality, it is necessary to protest against some of the opinions Mr. Disraeli enunciates in this

psychological romance. When he says that happiness can never flourish except among societies in which it is the custom for youths to marry at eighteen, this oracular declaration may or may not be true, but it is perfectly harmless. It is certain that we shall never witness a great community existing under such circumstances. But when he draws the conclusion that we ought thus to obey our instincts, and attempts to depreciate moral philosophy, he is certainly treading on very dangerous ground. Is it for a Jewish descendant, one, too, who is continually boasting of the high privileges of his people, and declaring, in a taunting manner, that Providence has only condescended to speak with them, coolly to set aside the book of Genesis, and affirm that the various tribes that people this globe, in all probability spring from different animals? Is it for him, is it for any legislator to declare that nothing is more useless than what is styled "moral philosophy," that "the whole system of moral philosophy is a delusion, fit only for the play of sophists in an age of physiological ignorance," that man ought to obey his instincts, and that physiology is everything, and moral philosophy nothing? "Man," says Mr. Disraeli, "is an animal; his nature ought to be studied like other animals." Man is, indeed, an

animal, but he is something more. Who studies the inferior animals? Man. But who is to study man? Himself. It followed naturally indeed from that strange observation about the Deity and the animal in 'Vivian Grey,' that this young author should have then professed such very extraordinary principles. They might be looked over in a work executed in early youth; but it is painful to see them re-asserted in a more matured composition, and republished unaltered at forty-seven, when the author had become a responsible legislator. The existence of government is a proof that man cannot be permitted blindly to obey his instincts. Education teaches him to restrain them, moral laws sanction these restraints, religion makes them sacred. By doing away with moral philosophy, we virtually do away with all government and all religion. If man obeys only his instincts, he does indeed degenerate into an animal, and is never less a man than when he thus allows himself to become a brute. Can it be believed that in England, and at this time of day, it should be necessary seriously to assert such obvious, and unquestionable truths, against one who declares himself a political regenerator? A strange political regeneracy it must be, that is to commence by destroying moral philosophy and

allowing men to obey only their brutal instincts. Again and again, in considering such sentiments, every cultivated and well-regulated mind must be struck by their contrast with the principles of the greatest political philosopher that the world has ever seen. Again and again, when Mr. Disraeli asserts that wise legislation is not only not synonymous with, but even opposed to, our common notions of morality, it cannot but be remembered that the profound, high-minded. eloquent, and wise Edmund Burke, the most far-seeing of statesmen, and the greatest genius that ever sat in the House of Commons, based all his political philosophy on moral philosophy. "The whole system of moral philosophy," says Mr. Disraeli, "is a delusion, fit only for the play of sophists in an age of physiological ignorance." What a contrast is here! It is well that the new generation should meditate and determine whether they are to adopt the principle of Edmund Burke or Benjamin Disraeli. Are we, with Burke, to inscribe "manly morality" on our banners, or, with Mr. Disraeli, to write "animal morality"? Under which flag shall we conquer? Each prophet has been consistent with his principles. Burke's noble, strict moral consistency throughout his life will never be properly appreciated unless his leading principle

is thoroughly understood; and perhaps some new light will be thrown on Mr. Disraeli's career by thus having, at the outset, his ideas on moral philosophy indicated.

And as for youths marrying at eighteen, when Mr. Disraeli thus adopts the notions of his Jewish ancestors, and affirms that, because the Americans marry earlier than Englishmen, they are also purer, any one might ask, was purity so remarkably characteristic of the Hebrews who followed this custom? We have only to read our Bibles to be convinced that, whatever might be the admirable qualities of the Hebrews, purity was certainly not one of their most distinguishing characteristics.

The beaten track of experience is ever regarded with aversion by a certain class of political speculators. They must ever be considered as great originators, or they are miserable. In the presence of the mighty capitol of England's glory, Mr. Disraeli fancies that she would have been greater and more illustrious had the Saxon Heptarchy continued. George Canning, in the House of Commons one night, in reply to some observations on the Repeal of the Union, exclaimed, as he stamped with indignation on the floor, "Repeal the Union! Restore the Heptarchy!" as though the restoration of the Heptarchy was, as

it is generally considered, the climax of absurdity. This accomplished statesman, had he lived a few years longer, might have read with astonishment in the work of one who was afterwards to be the leader of the Tory party, a regret for the loss of the Heptarchy. That, however strange some of these opinions of Mr. Disraeli are, they may at least be fairly quoted, even the context of all these paradoxical observations is given. "I wish that the world," says Mr. Disraeli,* "consisted of a cluster of small states. There would be much more genius, and what is of more importance, much more felicity. Federal unions would preserve us from the evil consequences of local jealousy, and might combine in some general legislation of universal benefit. Italy might then revive; and even England may regret that she has lost her Heptarchy."

Mr. Disraeli considers all European nations as mere imitators. "Imitation," he says, "is the law of modern Europe." Meditating among the ruins of Athens, he declares, and it were well that his admirers at Oxford should also ponder on their idol's words, "He who profoundly meditates upon the situation of modern Europe will also discover how productive of misery has been

* 'Contarini Fleming,' Part iv., Chap. v.

the senseless adoption of oriental customs by northern people." He then indignantly exclaims, and hear him, oh, Oxford! "Whence came that divine right of kings which has deluged so many countries with blood? that pastoral and Syrian law of tithes, which may yet shake the foundations of so many ancient institutions?"

He gazes upon Marathon, and sails upon the free waters of Salamis. He then advises the students of literature not to study English, Italian, and German, since they have been founded on the classic tongues; but to study the pages of the Persians and the Arabs. "Why limit our experiences," he asks, "to the immortal languages of Greece and Rome? Why not study the oriental?" Yet it is only in the preceding chapter that he declaimed against the "adoption of oriental customs by northern people."

With the same consistency, in his philippics against moral philosophy, Mr. Disraeli affirms that we must study the nature of man as we study the nature of other animals; and then he immediately afterwards adds, "but to study men from the past is to suppose that man is ever the same animal, which I do not." Now if man is ever changing, he must be changing physiologically as well as morally. Suppose a tyro in chemistry going to a great professor, and saying, "Your science is a

delusion; it is perfect nonsense. You tell me that certain chemical agents act in a certain manner, and you prove your assertions by experiments. But if there be other chemical agents discovered, how will they act? You cannot tell me; you do not know them; what, then, can be more idle than your nice study of chemical laws?" This is exactly what Mr. Disraeli says to the moral philosopher. Once more let his own words be quoted. "Napoleon is First Consul, and would found a dynasty. There is no doubt of it. Read my character of Cromwell. But what use is the discovery, when the Consul is already tearing off his republican robe, and snatching the imperial diadem? And suppose—which has happened, and may and will happen again—suppose a being of a different organization from Napoleon or Cromwell placed in the same situation—a being gifted with a combination of intelligence hitherto unknown—where, then, is our moral philosophy, our nice study of human nature?"

It is in vain to reason with one whose opinions are evidently not the result of reason. To call much that has been here considered poetry, or psychology, would be an abuse of words. It is more than time to leave 'Contarini Fleming;' yet it was necessary to consider it attentively. Such extreme opinions as these have doubtless

been perused by many readers without thinking to what they irresistibly lead. Mr. Disraeli himself, it is probable, never carefully pondered on his objectionable principles; what he wanted to do was to produce something novel and singular, without reflecting on the ultimate consequences of these paradoxes. No man is so dangerous as he who sets himself up to be a discoverer in morality, for in morality we can make no discoveries. This was the great mistake of Rousseau; and there is some resemblance between Rousseauism and Disraelism. Disraelism will, perhaps, be found on an analysis to be a compound of Voltaireism, Rousseauism, and Toryism. A strange and unnatural compound! 'Contarini Fleming,' throughout much of his autobiography, is a professed and enthusiastic disciple of Voltaire; and those continual appeals to physiology must remind all who are acquainted with the speculations of the Parisian atheists of the last century, of the general tone of the discourses in those literary assemblies where physiology was made the excuse for immorality. The young hero, it must be charitably supposed, became wiser as he grew older; yet in his last chapter, the building a tower of one hundred and fifty feet high, dedicating it to the Future, and intending it to be his tomb, and in the very last sentence, the sentimentalism about his being

one who, "in a sad night of gloomy ignorance and savage bigotry, was prescient of the shining morning-break of bright philosophy," leave the judicious reader in a somewhat unpleasing mood. This expression, "the shining morning-break of bright philosophy," smacks a little of the philosophical charlatan. It is Voltaire altogether. Surely the last century saw enough of the morning-break of bright philosophy, and it is time that the hour of earnest labour should have come.

Mr. Disraeli republished 'Contarini Fleming' when he had become famous. In the preface to this new edition, he expressly affirmed that, though the book was written in his youth, after a careful critical examination, it had obtained the approbation of his maturity. Thus, it was but right to dwell upon it, for the parliamentary Mr. Disraeli has deliberately associated himself with this psychological production of Disraeli the Younger.

Such was now the singular name that the restless literary and political aspirant had taken to himself. All the world might therefore know that there were two Disraelis, and that 'Contarini Fleming' was written, not by Isaac the elder, but by Benjamin the younger. The work was not at first very successful; indeed, as Mr. Disraeli acknowledges, "it seemed that it must

die." But, then, he takes care to tell the public that "it has gradually gained the sympathies of the thoughtful and the refined, and has had the rare fortune of being cherished by great men." To this, of course, everybody must bow. When an author tells his readers in a preface that his work has been cherished by great men, the good reader must cherish it also, or consent to be ranked with very little men.

If we were to trust this autobiography, Mr. Disraeli was then projecting a life of poetical contemplation. The work was written after deep meditation. It was composed in a land favourable to composition. Visions of great and enduring poetic fame played before its author's mind. While he is indulging in these reveries under the shadow of the pyramids, and even quietly tabooing the existence of England, strange tidings reach his ears. The English newspapers speak about revolution, the reform agitation has reached its climax, and a new world is opened to young ambition. In 'Contarini Fleming' its gifted author had yearned for the moment when he could be the leader of "eloquent faction," and had declared that he was born to breathe in an atmosphere of revolution. Here was England in a fury, faction eloquent enough, and the revolutionary atmosphere hot

enough. Disraeli the Younger awoke in a moment from his dreams about poetry, and with the manuscript of "the psychological romance" in his pocket, dashed off to England as fast as post-horses could carry him. In his opinion, the hour had come, and also the man. He snuffed his approaching glory in every breeze. What were Charles Earl Grey, and Henry Brougham, compared with Disraeli the younger, who was about to seize the prize of revolutionary ambition from their hands? The postilion furiously cracked his whip; Disraeli the Younger and his fortunes were being borne to their destination; everywhere a still small voice whispered in the ears of the aspiring psychologist, "You have been long expected."

CHAPTER IV.

But it must not be supposed that Mr. Disraeli could be absent so long on his pilgrimage without sending to the English public any kind remembrances. A year before 'Contarini Fleming' appeared, a fashionable novel, with the taking title of 'The Young Duke,' was published, and avowed to be the composition of this author, who informed all his readers in the preface that he was then upon his travels. It must be charitably believed that the poetical spirit had not come over Mr. Disraeli when he was writing 'The Young Duke,' for it is composed in the old 'Vivian Grey' style, and only shows that he was the same man in 1831 as in 1826. "The Indian debate may proceed," said Mr. Disraeli, in his preface to 'The Young Duke,

"but still the people require amusement;" and therefore this production was sent forth in hot haste from the Colburn press, and its imperfections apologised for by the publisher, as the author was abroad. In one of the notes appended to the work, 'Pelham, or the Adventures of a Gentleman' was highly praised, and Mr. Bulwer complimented as one of the very few rising geniuses who promised to do honour to English literature.

As soon as Mr. Disraeli had time to look about him on his return from the East, Mr. Bulwer became one of his intimate literary and political friends. A strange scene of excitement was this reforming England. Years before, Vivian Grey had declared that there was a spirit at work which might lead to fortune. Now, in this great political crisis, what was a Vivian Grey to do? Was he not able to compete single-handed with all those great Whig chiefs who were triumphantly riding in the whirlwind, and directing the storm?

Mr. Disraeli stood alone. He would not bow to the puppets of the hour. His heart was neither with Peel and Wellington, nor with Brougham and Grey. To him the great Whig leaders were a rapacious and incapable faction, not much better than highwaymen; and the great

Tory leaders apathetic and prostrate in the midst of a revolution which they had not foreseen, and could not comprehend. Now, the Whigs were the ruling body; but there were symptoms of disunion. Could not the Radicals be played off against the more moderate reformers? Mr. Disraeli resolved to offer himself to the constituency of High Wycombe; and he determined to get credentials from the leaders of extreme politicians of England, Scotland, and Ireland. O'Connell was then defying the Reform ministry. He was vehemently denounced by the Whig Secretary for Ireland. Mr. Disraeli wrote to O'Connell, and asked for his support, as that of one Radical to another Radical who was going to contest, on the Radical interest, the Wycombe election. O'Connell immediately set to work, and composed a letter for Mr. Disraeli, who thought it so excellent, that he printed it, and had it placarded through the streets of the town. To Mr. Hume also Mr. Disraeli applied for a letter of recommendation; this epistle was given, and duly printed and placarded by Mr. Disraeli and his friends. His electioneering committee was composed of an equal number of Radicals and Tories; and on the day of nomination Mr. Disraeli was proposed as a fit and proper candidate for the suffrages of the electors of

High Wycombe, by Mr. Treacher, the Radical, and seconded by Mr. Rose, the Tory.

Such tactics would seem almost to insure success. But Mr. Hume was soon informed that Mr. Disraeli's Radicalism, notwithstanding his enthusiastic advocacy of the ballot, triennial parliaments, and economical reform, was, after all, only an intense hatred of Whiggism; and some of the candidate's fiery denunciations having been duly reported to the Radical chief, Mr. Hume immediately informed Mr. Disraeli that he could not approve of such extreme anti-Whig invectives. This is exquisitely characteristic of Mr. Hume, and Mr. Disraeli. The Whigs have never had a truer friend than the present patriarch of the House of Commons; he has ever been careful not to permit any one to grumble at them but himself; and in all critical seasons, has manfully come to their rescue. On this occasion, Mr. Disraeli and his Radical-Tory committee soon had the vexation of seeing another address from Mr. Hume in favour of the Whig candidates. The hope that Mr. Hume had first expressed of all true reformers rallying round such a true reformer as Mr. Disraeli, whose principles were exactly the same as his own, was changed into an endeavour to secure the election of the Whig candidates,

one of whom was Colonel Grey, the son of the Whig prime minister. In vain did the author of 'Pelham' exert himself gallantly in favour of the author of 'Vivian Grey' in this electioneering campaign. Mr. Hume, not being a literary man, could have no indulgence for this extraordinary Radical, and after a close contest, our ardent champion of the ballot and triennial parliaments was defeated, but not discouraged.

This defeat, however, was significant. Mr. Disraeli, in his electioneering address, had stigmatised the Whigs as "a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction." During the whole course of the contest he had endeavoured to draw the minds of his hearers from the essential difference between liberal and conservative principles; and seemed to think that scurrilous abuse of the politicians in power was a sufficient foundation for a political reputation, and a passport to St. Stephen's chapel. The most honest and most upright of Radical reformers had preferred supporting the two Whig candidates to being made the instrument of one who evidently made use of Radical professions only as a means of entering the House of Commons, and who was prepared, at the proper season, to step forth a Tory. A Vivian Grey might have learnt from this, that it is as difficult

as it is unscrupulous to combine extreme parties against the more moderate and more responsible political section. A world of Vivian Greys being given, a Vivian Grey may rise to power; but among a people who are not mere good haters, and have some regard to principle, these too clever manœuvrers will assuredly fail.

In France, where the citizens are more mercurial, and less reflecting and calculating than in England, ambitious politicians found it easy to turn the "extreme left" against the "centre left." The French people were the dupes; and what has been the consequence? The French tribune has been overthrown; and all parliamentary government has been annihilated. It is not Louis Napoleon, nor his army, but dishonest French politicians themselves, by whom the representative system in France has been abolished. When institutions are perverted from their original purpose, and have become the theatre of the vilest machinations, why should they, any more than trees that will not bear fruit, be permitted to encumber the ground? We have had enough of party government in England; but the people have never altogether lost sight of the leading principles of their parties; and notwithstand-

ing the intrigues of courtiers and demagogues, the salt has not yet lost its savour, and the sturdy, upright English hearts and minds have been the means of our political salvation. Thus it was in the present case. The people could not understand the meaning of the singular Radicalism which was professed by this accomplished author.

Mr. Disraeli believed that the eyes of all the great politicians were upon him, and that they were asking each other who, and what Disraeli the Younger was? He was informed that even Earl Grey had asked the question, "what is he?" and that the reforming prime minister might not remain in ignorance of what the newly-arrived Radical champion was, Mr. Disraeli published a pamphlet, with the title of 'What is he?' This rhodomontade left the question in still more perplexity; for it was quite unintelligible, as all professions of faith must ever be from those who really have no faith, and adopt the words of Count Fleming, in the psychological romance which was then just being issued from the press, and declared to be by the author of 'Vivian Grey,' "few ideas are correct ones, and what are correct no one can ascertain; but with words we govern

men." The purchasers of 'What is he?' had words for their money; but nothing more; and this choice production can now scarcely ever be met with. It is not to be found even in the repositories of the British Museum, nor is it mentioned in the most comprehensive catalogues of the productions of that stormy period, when pamphlets were published by thousands every month. It may therefore be charitably left in peace; and when Mr. Disraeli's political opinions assume a more definite shape, as they will be found to do some few years after this time, a full consideration of them may be more opportunely given. When such mighty volumes as 'Alroy,' and the 'Revolutionary Epic' remain to be noticed, little space indeed can be allowed in this biography to the sixpenny pamphlet that has long ago gone into the clutches of the trunk-makers.

Not the least extraordinary of paradoxes was certainly that of which 'What is he?' and the Wycombe election were made the vehicle. To Mr. Disraeli there was nothing alarming in the vibration of that tocsin of reform which was then resounding throughout the land, and stirring the hearts of the people. The days of the Duke of Newcastle, and the great Whig magnificoes were

coming over again, said Mr. Disraeli. England, according to him, was to be bought, sold, and plundered, by Lord John Russell, Earl Grey, Lord Palmerston, Lord Althorp, and Lord Brougham. Mr. Disraeli was himself, of course, perfectly pure and disinterested; but all the Whig politicians were vile egotists, going to bind the nation under their feet. How singularly these apprehensions of Mr. Disraeli were proved in three years to be ridiculous, is of no consequence, truth or falsehood having nothing to do with his paradoxes. All we have to consider is their originality, and this theory was plainly original. The present Earl of Derby, with whom Mr. Disraeli is so closely connected, was the most daring and vehement of those liberal patricians; and it would, perhaps, be too inquisitive were any inquiries to be made, whether these two political friends before the formation of their memorable ministry of ten months' duration, had come to some agreement of opinion on the condition of England in 1831, the reform agitation, and the designs of the Whig leaders.

The defeat at High Wycombe was certainly mortifying, but there was no reason to despair. Mr. Disraeli retired into his study, and composed

Alroy.] Yet even while his mind was apparently in the East, and in the twelfth century, he still kept an eye on the English constituencies. He was determined not to throw a chance away. A vacancy in the representation of Marylebone was anticipated in the spring of 1833, and Mr. Disraeli, from being the Hebrew poet, became the Marylebone Radical. The address he issued to the independent electors of this metropolitan constituency is the very model of a Radical programme, and it is but fair to present it in all its exquisite perfection. How could those ingenious electors, who are such chivalrous reformers both at home and abroad, detect the least grain of Toryism in this sparkling liberal effusion? The Marylebone electors and the Marylebone members are ever famous for their hatred of abuses, whether committed by bishops or secretaries of the Admiralty. Place-hunting and all official abominations are held in detestation by this eminent constituency. The address of Mr. Disraeli was therefore well adapted to fascinate all these enlightened reformers:—

"To the Independent Electors of the Borough of Marylebone.

"GENTLEMEN,

"A speedy vacancy being generally anticipated in the representation of your borough, I have the honour to announce my determination to solicit your suffrages on the first occasion that offers.

"Although supported by neither of the aristocratic parties, I appeal to you with confidence as an independent member of society, who has no interest, either direct or indirect, in corruption or misgovernment, as one of a family untainted by the receipt of public money, and which can prefer no claims to public consideration but those that are founded on public sympathy.

"I claim your support as a man who has already fought the battle of the people, and as one who believes that the only foundation on which a beneficent and vigorous government can now be raised is on an unlimited confidence in the genius of the British nation.

"With this conviction, I am desirous of completing the machinery of the constitution by two measures which will invest the people with what was once their birthright, and with a security which I hope their children will inherit. These

measures are Triennial Parliaments and Election by Ballot; and unless these measures be conceded, I cannot apprehend how the conduct of the government can ever be in harmony with the feelings of the peole.

" Because I am of opinion that those who are invested with power should be qualified for its exercise, I would support the abrogation of those stamp duties which eventually act as taxes on knowledge.

" Believing that unless the public burdens are speedily and materially reduced, a civil convulsion must occur, I am desirous of seeing a parliamentary committee appointed to revise the entire system of our taxation, with the object of relieving industry from those incumbances which property is more capacitated to endure; and I especially pledge myself to exert all my energies to obtain the repeal of the Assessed Taxes; a repeal which, from the state of the constituency of your borough, is as necessary as a measure of constitutional privilege as of financial relief.

" Opportunities will soon occur for me to express to you my opinions upon all those subjects which engage the attention of a man who aspires to be a representative of the people. It is sufficient for me to observe that I shall ever be

found a supporter of that system which consults the great interests of general happiness; and that I shall promote every measure which elevates the moral or improves the physical condition of the people of England. With these views, gentlemen, I solicit your attention. I hope soon to acquire your confidence.

"I have the honour to subscribe myself,

"Your faithful servant,

"BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

"*Bradenham House, Bucks,*
April 9, 1833."

Mr. Disraeli then claimed the support of the electors of Marylebone as "one of a family untainted by the receipt of public money." This was language strong enough, certainly, for the most radical reformer. Even Mr. Hume himself, whose countenance Mr. Disraeli endeavoured to acquire in this emergency, would not affirm that the mere receipt of public money confers a taint. Unless triennial parliaments and vote by ballot be conceded, too, Mr. Disraeli here deliberately asserts that he "cannot apprehend how the conduct of the Government can ever be in harmony with the feelings of the people." He declared that in every revision of taxation the interests of great boroughs, such as

that of Marylebone, ought especially to be considered; that with this view he would exert all his energies to obtain the repeal of the Assessed Taxes, not only as a measure of financial relief, but of constitutional privilege; and that in all financial reforms, industry ought to be relieved at the expense of property, because property is more capacitated to endure all such incumbrances. He then has a fling both at the Whigs and the Tories. "Though supported by neither of the aristocratic parties," "untainted by the receipt of public money, he preferred no claims to public consideration but those that are founded on public sympathy." The most determined Chartist could not evince more contempt for the aristocracy than this passage in Mr. Disraeli's address indicates. Then follows another remarkable sentence of stereotyped liberal rhetoric. "I claim your support," says Mr. Disraeli, "as a man who has already fought the battle of the people." This, of course, alludes to the contest at High Wycombe. Had Mr, Hume himself determined to stand on the Radical interest for the borough of Marylebone, this is just such an address as he might have issued. He certainly could not have penned a more decided liberal epistle.

The expected vacancy did not take place, and therefore Mr. Disraeli did not become the Radical member for the borough of Marylebone. Instead of this, it was willed that in a few years he should become the Tory member for the county of Buckingham.

The resources of genius are certainly wonderful. If Mr. Disraeli had been elected for Marylebone at this time, there might have been a very different future. He might have been the bitterest opponent of all conservative abuses, denounced the landed interest, closely allied himself with the Manchester reformers, appeared on the hustings as a corn-law repealer, addressed multitudes in Drury Lane theatre, praised Peel, abused Bentinck, and found himself now in office as one of the members of the coalition ministry. One of Mr. Disraeli's favourite opinions is, that in politics, men are especially the creatures of circumstances. It is only necessary to compare his language in addressing different constituencies, to be convinced, that, by the progress of events, he might as easily have appeared as an Irish demagogue, a Marylebone Radical, an eloquent advocate of the five points of the Charter, as the Buckingham protectionist. The Marylebone address must show what a very creditable Radical Mr. Disraeli

would have made. He would have been the most uncompromising and the most original of these extreme liberals.

For the remarkable characteristic of Disraeli the Younger, as well, perhaps, as of the great matured financier is the pretension with which every great effort is announced, 'Contarini Fleming' was not only to be an interesting and imaginative tale, but a grand poetic autobiography, which was to make a revolution in psychology. Everything was to be new, and the style especially new. When Mr. Disraeli supposed himself a poet, he was not satisfied with being a poet on the terms of Spenser and Milton, but he was to invent a new style of poetical composition entirely different from any which had ever before been used. It was in 'Contarini Fleming' that he first developed this new poetic theory, and the time had now come when he was to carry it into practice.

'The Wondrous Tale of Alroy,' and 'The Rise of Iskander,' were published together in three volumes by Messrs. Saunders and Otley in 1833. They were announced in the title-page as, "By the author of 'Vivian Grey,' 'Contarini Fleming,' &c." They were received with some degree of ridicule, and even Mr. Dis-

raeli's greatest admirers at the present time have admitted that these tales are ridiculous. One of the most partial of his critics has a theory upon which it is necessary, in connection with 'Alroy,' to make some observations. It is said that his earlier career was indeed full of "high nonsense," of which this 'Wondrous Tale' is considered the most remarkable example; but that, in succeeding years, he subjected himself to some wonderful process of mental discipline, subdued all his exaggerations, and became the model of orators and statesmen. Whether this theory be right or wrong, is to be considered. One fact is quite certain: Mr. Disraeli himself would by no means be inclined to accept the apology which has been put forward for his early extravagances. It is also certain that 'Contarini Fleming,' and even 'Alroy,' have been republished in Mr. Disraeli's maturity, with his approbation. On a full consideration, it will perhaps be found that his character has ever been consistent with itself, that no wonderful change came over his mind about the year 1843, but that he was in 1833 what he was in 1843, and is in 1853. It may perhaps appear that the same man who in 1833 thought himself a poet, and announced himself

as the inventor of a new style of poetical composition, is exactly the same man who about 1843, when he aspired to be a political philosopher, announced himself as the originator of a new Toryism, and the same man who about 1853, when he wished to be thought a great financier, declared himself the introducer of a new financial system.

Characters ought never to be judged merely by theories. The biographer must look at facts. Those who think that there is such a mighty difference between the present Mr. Disraeli, and Disraeli the Younger of twenty years ago, will find it difficult to account for 'Alroy,' the production of the period of their idol's extravagance in 1833 being republished with the stamp of his approbation in the calm season of his maturity, even during this year 1853. The truth is, the characters of men never change in this wonderful manner. No process of mental discipline will ever convert an Iago into an Othello. This is contrary to human nature; the child is ever father to the man. The poetical theory in conformity with which 'Alroy' was expressly written, is singular; but after all, the tale of 'Alroy' itself is not so very extravagant; it has more completeness than many of the author's fictions, and

is an interesting and readable romance. Yet this is the work at which even his friends have laughed. Mr. Disraeli's enthusiastic admirers have perhaps rapturously cheered quite as "high nonsense" as they profess to smile at in 'Alroy.' Had it been written and published simply as a tale, without any pretentious preface, and free from those occasional would-be poetical rhapsodies, 'The Wondrous Tale of Alroy' might have been thought superior to most oriental romances. Mr. Disraeli's poetry renders his book ludicrous, and would have made any book ludicrous. It is neither prose nor verse, neither rhyme nor reason. It is at once tame and tawdry, and is in itself sufficient to prove that its author has no idea of real poetry.

Mr. Disraeli's poetic theory is, that the age of versification has passed, and indeed was only the natural product of ancient times, when the poet used the human voice as his instrument. According to this, the spirit of ancient poetry was material and superficial, not metaphysical and internal. As poems in those old times had generally the accessories of music and dancing, metre was thus borrowed from one of the sister arts, and the new phraseology called "poetic diction," was the result. Thus strange phrases and unnatural

constructions, inversions, and epithets, were introduced in order to dignify commonplaces, and poetry became the art of expressing natural feelings in unnatural language. At the revival of letters, Mr. Disraeli says, national poets adopted the poetic diction of antiquity, as the Europeans have adopted a Syrian religion, a Grecian literature, and a Roman law. Variety was sought in artificial diction, and the barbarity of rhyme was substituted for the melody of the lyre. Notwithstanding this innovation, the poet never emancipated himself from "servile metre," and he still continued to communicate his inspirations through the medium of an invention which was only properly used when the poet recited his compositions.

This is Mr. Disraeli's theory, which he first developed in 'Contarini Fleming,' and afterwards quoted in his preface to the work intended to produce this mighty poetical revolution that was to introduce a new poetical era, and free the poet from trammels which bound him like the sacred bird to Olympus. It is now to be seen how Mr. Disraeli snapped the golden chain, rose above all the great poets of all ages, and like this same sacred bird, soared above Jove, as he foretold the poet would do as soon as these restraints were taken away.

He selected the period of the twelfth century, when the Caliphate was, as the poet tells the reader, in rapid decay, and the Seljukian Sultans who had come to the assistance of the Commander of the Faithful, were really like the mayors of the palace in France, the rulers of the empire. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews gathered themselves together under one whom they believed to be a descendant of David, and whom they styled the prince of the captivity. With the weakness of the Caliphate, the power of these imaginary princes of the captivity increased. Mr. Disraeli ventures to place one of them at Hamadan, and 'The Wondrous Tale of Alroy' opens on the day of tribute. Young David Alroy absents himself from the humiliating procession, and in the evening kills the son of the Sultan, who was offering violence to the gentle Miriam, Alroy's beloved sister. He betakes himself to the desert, meets with the great Hebrew prophet, Jabaster, and appears as the leader of an army composed of the fighting men of Judah. He defeats Hassan Subah, and after many successes, in defiance of the warnings of the prophetess, enters Bagdad in triumph. He marries the daughter of the Caliph, neglects Jabaster and the more rigid Hebrews, who con-

spire against him. The plot fails, and Jabaster, without the knowledge of Alroy, is strangled. And then, nothing succeeds with the prince of the captivity. A combined invasion, headed by Alp Arslan, who is represented as the King of Karasmania, overwhelms the Jewish Caliph. Alroy flies from the plains of Nehauend, is at length betrayed, and has his head cut off by a stroke of Alp Arslan's sabre.

This romance Mr. Disraeli seriously mistakes for poetry, and believes it better than the poetry of all metrical bards. As a romance the book is interesting, but whenever it attempts to be poetical it is absurd. The poet who indulged in metre may have made use of inversions, as Mr. Disraeli informs us, for the purpose of clothing commonplaces with an air of novelty; he may have introduced vague epithets to prop up a monotonous modulation; but still a great poet, whether he writes with or without metre, will ever produce a great poem, and no mere rejection of metre will ever make good poetry. It is but right to give one specimen, and a very favourable specimen, of Mr. Disraeli's poetry as it is presented in Alroy. The reader will then judge whether Mr. Disraeli really is a poet, and whether his strains are more worthy of our admiration than those of the mighty bards whom we all reverence.

Here is one of the most rapturous and enthusiastic flights of his muse. It is an apostrophe to Alroy's soldiers as they make their triumphal entry into Bagdad:—

"The waving of banners, the flourish of trumpets, the neighing of steeds, and the glitter of spears. On the distant horizon, they gleam like the morning, when the gloom of the night shines bright into day.

"Hark! the trump of the foeman like the tide of the ocean, flows onward and onward, and conquers the shore. From the brow of the mountain, like the rush of a river, the column defiling melts into the plain. Warriors of Judah! holy men that battle for the Lord! The land wherein your fathers wept, and touched their plaintive psaltery; the haughty city where your sires bewailed their cold and distant hearths: your steeds are prancing on its plains, and you shall fill its palaces. Warriors of Judah! holy men that battle for the Lord!

"March onward, march, ye valiant tribes, the hour has come, the hour has come. All the promises of sages, all the signs of sacred ages meet in this ravishing hour. Where is now the oppressor's chariot? where your tyrant's purple robe? The horse and the rider are both overthrown, the horse and the rider are both overthrown!

"Rise, Rachel, from the wilderness, arise, and weep no more. No more thy lonely palm-trees' shade need shroud thy secret sorrowing. The Lord has heard the widow's sigh; the Lord hath stilled the widow's tear. Be comforted, be comforted, thy children live again!

"Yes! yes! upon the bounding plain fleet Asriel glances like a star, and stout Scherirah shakes his spear by stern Jabaster's scimitar. And He is there, the chosen one, hymned by prophetic harps, whose life is like the morning dew on Sion's holy hill; the chosen one, the chosen one, that leads his race to victory, warriors of Judah! holy men that battle for the Lord!

"They come, they come, they come!"

This is Mr. Disraeli's poetry. These are the strains intended to revolutionize modern literature, and shame us out of our admiration for Shakspeare and Homer, and all their "commonplace inversions" and "monotonous modulations." Never was there a more extraordinary instance of self-delusion. We might at least expect that when this author accuses all modern bards of being imitators, he himself would have been decidedly original. But it so happens that many of the scenes in Alroy are glaring imitations of scenes in 'Macbeth,' 'Richard the Third,' and 'Brutus.' The very diction in some

dialogues of this romance is directly copied from Shakspeare. This is imitation with a vengeance. Mr. Disraeli makes a sweeping charge against all modern poets; they are all, in his opinion, imitators; he writes a poetical work avowedly in a new original style; and, when it is carefully examined, the language is found in many places to be copied from one of these great moderns whom he brands as imitators. The witch scenes in 'Macbeth' appear again in Alroy, and some of the immortal Shakspearian expressions familiar to everybody, the bewildered reader finds in this oriental poem. Richard the Third exclaims, at the battle of Bosworth Field, "my kingdom for a horse!" Alroy shouts out after another battle, "a kingdom for a drink of water!" Macbeth says, "throw physic to the dogs;" Alroy says, "throw accidents to the dogs." But it is not an occasional expression, but the style, of which Mr. Disraeli professed to be the inventor, which is, in many dialogues, borrowed from Shakspeare. They are not very happy imitations. What is beautiful in 'Macbeth' is ridiculous in 'Alroy.' Mr. Disraeli ought to have remembered his own theory. When he was upbraiding all modern poets for being imitators, he ought at least not to have imitated them. Several of the pages which were to be very

grand and heroic, about Jabaster's ghost, and the "Meet me in the plains of Nehauend," remind every reader of the night scene in the tent of Brutus. It cannot be said, indeed, that they are so noble and impressive in Mr. Disraeli's hands as they are in Shakspeare's; it seems at once a burlesque of Shakspeare and of oriental romance, thus to make the Hebrew hero speak the words of Brutus and Macbeth. We are irresistibly reminded of some of those cast-off theatrical dresses which may occasionally be seen suspended in the shop-windows of the Jewish dealers in Monmouth-street.

It must not, however, be supposed that Alroy is altogether an imitation. Much of the poetry is truly original. Mr. Disraeli's young heroes have the imprudent propensity of falling in love at first sight, and of breaking out into soliloquies. Alroy, while he is a poor refugee, sees Schirene, the caliph's daughter, and as soon as he again finds himself alone, he thus allows the torrent of his emotions to burst forth :—

"The spirit of my dreams, she comes at last; the form for which I have sighed and wept, the form which rose upon my radiant vision when I shut my eyes against the jarring shadows of this gloomy world.

"Schirene! Schirene! here in this solitude I

pour to thee the passion long stored up—the passion of my life, no common life, a life full of deep feeling and creative thought. Oh, beautiful! oh, more than beautiful! for thou to me art as a dream unbroken. Why art thou not mine? Why lose a moment in our glorious lives, and baulk our destiny of half its bliss?"

"Fool, fool, hast thou forgotten? The rapture of a prisoner in his cell, whose wild fancy for a moment belies his fetters! The daughter of the caliph and a Jew!

"Give me my father's sceptre!

"A plague on talismans! Oh, I need no inspiration but her memory, no magic but her name. By heavens, I'll enter this glorious city a conqueror, or I'll die!

"Why, what is life? for meditation mingles even with my passion—why, what is life? Throw accidents to the dogs, and tear off the painted mask of false society! Here am I a hero, with a mind that can devise all things, and a heart of superhuman daring; with youth, with vigour, with a glorious lineage, with a form that has made full many a lovely maiden of our tribe droop her fair head by Hamadan's sweet fount, and I am—nothing.

"Out on society; 'twas not made for me. I'll form my own, and be the deity I sometimes feel.

"We make our fortunes, and we call them fate. Thou saidst well, Honain. Most subtle Sadducee! The saintly blood flowed in my fathers' veins, and they did nothing; but I have an arm formed to wield a sceptre, and I will win one.

"I cannot doubt my triumph. Triumph is a part of my existence. I am born for glory, as a tree is born to bear its fruit or to expand its flowers. The deed is done. 'Tis thought of, and 'tis done. I'll confront the greatest of my diademed ancestors, and in his tomb. Mighty Solomon!—he wedded Pharaoh's daughter! Hah! what a future dawns upon my hope. An omen, a choice omen.

"Heaven and earth are mingling to form my fortunes. My mournful youth I have so often cursed, I hail thee! thou wert a glorious preparation; and when, feeling no sympathy with the life around me, I deemed myself a fool, I find I was a most peculiar being. By heavens, I am joyful; for the first time in my life I am joyful. I could laugh, and fight, and drink. I am new born; I am another being! I am mad!

"Oh, Time! great Time! the world belies thy fame. It calls thee swift. Methinks thou art wondrous slow. Fly on, great Time, and on thy coming wings bear me my sceptre!"

Shakspeare wrote many soliloquies, and although Mr. Disraeli has done Shakspeare the honour of imitating him, while professedly attempting to supersede him, it is evident that this soliloquy is not at all Shakspearian. It is in a different style from the soliloquies in Hamlet and Macbeth. It is Mr. Disraeli's new style, the style which he "frankly owns" he has invented; and thus materials are now given, by which the value of his contributions to poetical literature may be estimated. After reading the address to the Hebrew soldiers, and this effusion of Alroy, specimens which are certainly not worse, and may be considered better than the rest of the work, can any one think that the poetical reform, which must give us 'Alroy' for 'Paradise Lost,' or the 'Faerie Queene,' is desirable? Whatever 'Alroy' may be, it is certainly not a poem, nor is the language at all poetical. There is no style more opposed to genuine English than this of Mr. Disraeli, which can only be considered as so much oriental bombast. Did ever any amorous hero soliloquize like Alroy and Contarini Fleming? Their two soliloquies should be placed side by side and carefully compared. Contarini, the poetical Venetian, and Alroy, the Jewish warrior, make love exactly in the same style, as indeed do all

Mr. Disraeli's heroes. Like Byron, he can draw but one character, and this character he supposes to be in his own image. His heroes believe that they are peculiar beings, different from the ordinary children of mortality, and that nothing can resist either their personal or mental charms. They believe themselves born to triumph, and have no liking for the calm, quiet virtues of life. With them the end justifies the means, although many of their actions are such as it is impossible for any moralist to admire. The great Iskander though represented as the very perfection of patriotic heroism, commences his exertions for his country and religion by an act of military treachery and desertion, such as no soldier can ever commit without dishonour. Yet the author does not consider this action as dishonourable; for he deigns not even to say a single word in exculpation of it, and evidently thinks it praiseworthy.

Yet with all the serious and ludicrous faults of these two romances, 'The Wondrous Tale of Alroy,' and the 'Rise of Iskander,' there is less of that painful self-consciousness in them than in any other of Mr. Disraeli's works, with the exception of 'Henrietta Temple.' Now and then, indeed, there are bursts of Disraelism, but still they are few and far between, and the less there are of

them the more pleasant reading the books are. On one occasion the author certainly speaks of his "years of coming fame," and on another, makes Alroy's sister foresee in some distant time the rise of a poet, "within whose veins our sacred blood may flow, his fancy fired with the national theme, may strike his harp to Alroy's wild career, and consecrate a name too long forgotten." The poet in whose veins the Hebrew blood was to flow, and whose fancy was to be fired by this national theme, who was to strike the harp to Alroy's wild career, and consecrate his name, is, of course, Mr. Disraeli. Still, had he written nothing more egotistical than this, he might have passed for a modest author; and had he carefully developed his 'Wondrous Tale of Alroy' as a romance, and renounced every pretension to poetry, it might have been a pleasant production. There is no great evil in it; and this is a negative praise which cannot be given to the majority of Mr. Disraeli's fictions. It contains no personalities, no immoralities, no malignities.

The select portion of the public who take an interest in new publications had scarcely well enjoyed their laugh over the poetry of Alroy, when a still more wonderful work was announced by the same author. This bore on the

first page the title of 'The Revolutionary Epic, the work of Disraeli the Younger, author of the Psychological Romance.' It characteristically proclaimed in the preface that the gifted author had now undertaken to write a great poem, and the approbation of the public was earnestly solicited. At the first glance it would therefore seem singular that this aspiring Tory statesmen should at this time wish to be regarded as the great poet of revolutions, and most indubitably declare himself as the author of 'The Revolutionary Epic.' But singularities were evidently natural to Mr. Disraeli. He was so condescending as to inform the world of the day on which he experienced his new and mighty poetic birth.

As he was wandering on the plains of Troy, surrounded "by the tombs of heroes, and the confluences of poetic streams," his thoughts recurred to the immortal Greek epic, and Mr. Disraeli believed that he also was a kindred genius with Homer, and cursed his destiny for placing him in an unpoetical age. As the lightning flashed over Ida, the thought flashed across his mind that the poet had always embodied the spirit of his age; and as the spirit of the age was revolutionary, he was destined to be the great revolutionary poet. But here it is absolutely

necessary to give literally Mr. Disraeli's own language, lest any one unacquainted with 'The Revolutionary Epic' should suspect that the preface is burlesqued, instead of being most faithfully represented. Speaking of that memorable hour of his poetic birth on the plains of Troy, "And while my fancy thus struggled with my reason, it flashed across my mind like the lightning that was then playing over Ida, that in those great poems which rise the pyramids of poetic art amid the falling and the fading splendour of less creations, the poet hath ever embodied the spirit of his time. Thus the most heroic incident of an heroic age produced in the 'Iliad,' an Heroic Epic; thus the consolidation of the most superb of empires produced in the 'Æneid,' a Political Epic; the revival of learning and the birth of vernacular genius presented us in the 'Divine Comedy' with a National Epic; and the Reformation and its consequences called from the rapt lyre of Milton a Religious Epic. And the spirit of my time, shall it alone be uncelebrated?

"Standing upon Asia, and gazing upon Europe, with the broad Hellespont alone between us, and the shadow of night descending on the mountains, these mighty continents appeared to me, as it were, the Rival Principles of Government that

at present contend for the mastery of the world. 'What!' I exclaimed,' is the Revolution of France a less important event than the Siege of Troy?—Napoleon a less interesting character than Achilles? *For me* remains the Revolutionary Epic.'"

Some time elapsed before our revolutionary poet could execute the great poetical design formed on the plains of Troy, in the presence of both Europe and Asia. Full of his great idea, he dashed down to the shore, a strong breeze filled his sails, and the next morning's dawn broke on the Propontic sea, and his delighted eyes "beheld the glittering minarets and the cypress groves of the last city of the Cæsars." As he resided in that pleasant capital, his "Dardanian reverie" frequently occupied his mind, but it was dispelled by the distractions of travel, the composition of his work on the poetic character and his Jewish romance. To return to England in the midst of a revolution, was, perhaps, advantageous to one who was to be the revolutionary poet. England, during the Reform excitement, was surely the fitting place for the poet who had to write an epic on revolutions rivalling Homer's heroic epic, Virgil's political epic, Dante's national epic, and Milton's religious epic. This may in some measure explain the

precipitate haste with which the author of 'Contarini Fleming' rushed to England. After all, it was better for the revolutionary poet to be making an election speech at High Wycombe than to be standing upon the plains of Troy, and gazing from Asia upon Europe.

Most writers of epics have contemplated immortality. They have commenced their great works in a terribly earnest spirit, feeling conscious that, however their poems might be received by their giddy and ignorant contemporaries, they would gradually make to themselves readers, and last as long as the language in which they were composed. But Virgil was so sensible of the imperfections in the great poem which had cost him so many years of study, that he left it to be burnt. Dante, amid all his struggles and sorrows, worked manfully at the mighty creation that "had made him lean for many years." Milton, in blindness and misery, sang of man's first disobedience, retorted the scorn of an age for which he was too good, looked to the time when he would have a fit audience, and calmly and proudly felt that though he might only receive ten pounds from the booksellers for Paradise Lost, it was a work so written that posterity would not willingly let it die. We all know how derisively Words-

worth's first poems were received, how quietly this derision was returned, and how he, unmoved at the neglect of his contemporaries, set about writing "a book that would live." Our revolutionary poet was not, however, made of the stuff of Dante, Milton, and Wordsworth. He declared in his preface, and most certainly he was the first great poet that ever made such an extraordinary declaration, that, although he had only presented the public with a small portion of his creation, and had an unlimited supply unpublished in his possession, yet, if this small portion was not approved of, he would cease from that moment to be a poet. "I am not," said the author of 'The Revolutionary Epic,' "one who finds consolation for the neglect of my contemporaries in the imaginary plaudits of a more sympathetic posterity. The public will decide whether this work is to be continued or completed; and if it pass in the negative, I shall, without a pang, hurl my lyre to Limbo."

The decision of the public was in the negative, and no more of 'The Revolutionary Epic' was published. It remains like some other great literary fragments. Imagine the poet standing on the plains of Troy, with the lightning playing over Ida, and the great idea breaking upon his mind. Imagine him dashing down to the sea-shore, his

ringlets flying in the breeze, and looking forward to the hour when he should be hailed as another Homer. Imagine him then, three years afterwards, carrying his immortal epic to Mr. Moxon's the publisher, receiving from him, in a month or two, an unfavourable report of the number of copies sold, and then, without a pang, in another fine frenzy, hurling his lyre to Limbo. Oh, lame and impotent conclusion! Was it for this that the lightning played over Ida, and Europe and Asia stood confronting each other? Was it for this that the spirit of Homer was invoked on the plains of Troy? Was it for this that 'The Revolutionary Epic' was written? Was it in such a catastrophe that Mr. Disraeli's poetical inspirations were to terminate? The revolutionary lyre was at once hurled to Limbo, and Mr. Moxon's warehouse was that tomb in which, for the future, the great deeds of Mr. Disraeli, as a psychological poet, were to be buried.

Humiliating as this conclusion is, there is another admission to be made still more humiliating. 'The Revolutionary Epic' deserved its fate. The people could not be accused of insensibility to the offspring of genius. 'The Revolutionary Epic, the work of Disraeli the Younger, Author of the Psychological Romance,' was one of the dullest, most pompous, and most unmeaning

quartos that ever pretended to be poetry. A great effort it does require to read through so many dreary pages of utter inanity. It is written in verse, which is only good for showing how Mr. Disraeli had abandoned his own theory about versification. After all that the author had said against metre, he is, in this 'Revolutionary Epic,' found attempting to imitate the lofty blank verse of Milton. After all that he has said about originality, many of the conservative sentiments of the genii are plagiarisms from one whose doctrines and life Mr. Disraeli dreads, because they rebuke his own opinions and career. Burke's prose is very admirable; but it is certainly not agreeable to find in this poem of Mr. Disraeli some of Burke's memorable sentiments turned into blank verse. "Art is man's nature," says Burke in the 'Reflections.' "Art is man's nature," says Magros, the genius of Feudalism, in 'The Revolutionary Epic,' the work of Disraeli the Younger. In the same immortal "Reflections on the French Revolution,' Burke says, "No generations could link with each other; men would become but as the flies of a summer." The same Magros, who certainly is a plagiarist, though plagiarism ought not to be found in the representative of Feudalism, sings,—

"Men become
But as the summer flies that gild an hour
Then die and rot."

In the 'Reflections,' again, Burke says, "We are taught to look with horror on those children of their country who are prompted rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of the magicians, in hopes that, by their poisonous weeds and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their father's life." Our friend Magros, the genius of Feudalism, has stolen these glorious words, and put them into bad blank verse:—

"But indeed
The children of their country now would seize
Their aged sire, and piece-meal hack his frame,
And in some cauldron's magic bubble thrust
The severed members, in the mad belief
That poisonous weeds and spells of muttered power
May nature renovate."

Thus Burke's prose and Mr. Disraeli's blank verse may be compared. Magros thrusts the severed limbs into the "magic bubble;" Burke puts them into the kettle of the magician. Magros thus mars what he steals, as plagiarists ever do. Many more striking coincidences of the same kind might be given; but there is no use in dwelling on the absurdities of detached passages in a quarto volume that is one entire absurdity, from the title-page to the concluding

verse, in which there is a "band of nervous youths" left dancing round the tree of "Lombard liberty." Still it was impossible to pass unnoticed the singular inconsistency of an author, declaring in one work that metre was altogether a clog to the poet, and publishing three years afterwards an epic poem all in metre; that poem, which is affectedly declared to be a work, and the work of 'Disraeli the Younger, Author of the Psychological Romance;' that very psychological romance in which the folly of metrical composition is pointed out! It is also impossible not to be struck with the inconsistency of a Tory bard writing revolutionary epics, and even taking Napoleon for his hero. Napoleon might be a hero; but he was certainly not a Tory hero. He has been called "the armed soldier of democracy." He is called in 'The Revolutionary Epic' by the Tory poet, who tells us that he will "teach wisdom both to monarchs and multitudes:"—

> "Nor king, nor deputy of kings,
> Yet greater than all kings."

CHAPTER V.

THE revolutionary lyre then was hurled to Limbo amid the indifference of the world; but Mr. Disraeli was not the man to despair, even after such a glaring failure. The characteristic of genius is to rise superior to disasters that prostrate common minds for ever. It is easy to picture the grim smile that played upon Mr. Disraeli's countenance, when so many hot-pressed and beautifully-printed quarto sheets, full of poetry that had been inspired on the plains of Troy, were consigned to the hands of the dealers in waste paper. He doubtless muttered in his deliberate and somewhat menacing manner, "Though the laurel is denied me as a revolutionary poet, people shall yet listen to me as a Tory statesman." He appears again, therefore, on the 16th of December of the same year, in the

town hall of High Wycombe. Though the prize of poetry was lost, all was not lost. The death of Earl Spencer had afforded an opportunity for dismissing the reform ministry that King William had once professed so much to honour. The Tories awoke from their despair, and, although without any definite policy, believed that their leaders, Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, would, in defiance of the liberals, be able to govern the nation. It soon became understood that the prime minister was himself going to hoist reform colours, and many of his supporters, with marvellously accommodating consciences, were preparing to support some measures which they had indignantly denounced when proposed by the Whigs. It was a time of anxious hope, and one of the most sanguine was Mr. Disraeli.

Fortunately for us, the speech he delivered on this interesting occasion was published by himself under the title of 'The Crisis Examined;' it being considered, as he informed his readers in one of his characteristic prefaces, "that a question of great public interest was placed in a just light." We may endeavour to gain some illumination from this just light which was then radiating in the town-hall of High Wycombe, and with this aid

endeavour to illustrate some perplexed passages of Mr. Disraeli's political career.

It will be gratifying to those who admire his consistency, to find that the great measure of the budget he brought forward twenty years afterwards was distinctly crayoned out in this address. The malt tax will ever be associated with Mr. Disraeli's ministerial career. He was right in endeavouring, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to repeal an impost he regarded as unjust. His agricultural hearers at High Wycombe were gratified to see their aspiring candidate declare "that the agricultural interest was more entitled than any other class to whatever boon the minister may spare. We may hope that the Exchequer may grant them, at least the partial relief of the malt tax, although I recommend them to petition for the whole." This was on the 16th of December, 1834. Who can therefore say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 4th of December, 1852, was not right in granting that boon to which he always believed the agricultural interest entitled? Unfortunately there is reason to suspect that Mr. Disraeli only regarded the repeal of the malt tax as a good electioneering cry in agricultural districts.

Another declaration in the same speech was

not quite so pleasing to the candidate's Tory supporters. A disagreeable association of O'Connellism still clung to Mr. Disraeli, and it was indeed a daring scheme to attempt to combine the stubborn Tory yeomanry, and the enthusiastic followers of the Irish demagogue, in support of Disraeli the Younger, and against the Whigs. Touching upon Ireland, he said, "Twelve months must not pass over without the very name of tithes in that country being abolished for ever; nor do I deem it less urgent that the Protestant establishment in that country shall be at once proportioned to the population which it serves."

Mr. Disraeli also favoured his hearers with some of his ideas on political characters. Indeed, nothing is more worthy of attention than his habit of ever forgetting great questions in mere personal considerations. It is as characteristic of the speech in 1833, as of his latest orations. He is always recurring to the personal. His affectation of political philosophy, is only used to introduce personalities with a better grace. Lord John Russell is here said to be "one, who on the same principles that bad wine produces good vinegar, has somehow turned from a tenth-rate author into a first-rate politician." Here is another

specimen of Mr. Disraeli's profound knowledge of human character. He characterises Lord Palmerston as the "child of corruption, born of Downing Street, a second-rate official for twenty years under a succession of Tory governments, but a Secretary of State under the Whigs." Then we have Mr. Disraeli's idea of a statesman. He attempts to show that Sir Robert would deserve no reproaches for becoming a reformer on accepting office, though he had, during his whole life, been hostile to reform, and vigorously opposed the reform bill, and the reform ministry. To appreciate Mr. Disraeli's apology for Sir Robert Peel, and this opinion on statesmanship, it must be remembered that in future years no person taunted this Minister so bitterly with inconsistency, and so indignantly denounced every act of expediency, as Mr. Disraeli. Yet we have here the doctrine of expediency brought forward as the key-stone of statesmanship, and any amount of inconsistency allowed with the utmost plainness. None of those politicians whom Mr. Disraeli has so frequently reviled for their measures of expediency, would go so far as he himself does in the following sentences. "The truth is, gentlemen," said Disraeli the Younger, with fascinating frankness,

"a statesman is the creature of his age, the child of circumstances, the creation of his times. A statesman is essentially a practical character; and when he is called upon to take office, he is not to inquire what his opinions might or might not have been upon this or that subject—he is only to ascertain the needful, and the beneficial, and the most feasible manner in which affairs are to be carried on. The fact is, the conduct and opinions of public men, at different periods of their career, must not be too curiously contrasted in a free and aspiring country. The people have their passions, and it is even the duty of public men occasionally to adopt sentiments with which they do not sympathise, because the people must have leaders. Then the opinions and the prejudices of the community must necessarily influence a rising statesman. I say nothing of the weight which great establishments and corporations, and the necessity of their support and patronage, must also possess with an ambitious politician. All this, however, produces ultimate benefit; and these influences tend to form that eminently practical character for which our countrymen are celebrated. I laugh, therefore, at the objections against a man, that, at a former period of his career, he advocated a policy dif-

ferent to his present one; all I seek to ascertain is, whether his present policy be just, necessary, expedient; whether he is at the present moment prepared to serve his country according to its present necessities."

This is sufficiently plain speaking. Never were sentiments uttered more adapted to sanction any amount of inconsistency. Never was language used so indicative of political latitudinarianism. Bolingbroke could not have said more, when, though an avowed freethinker, he was introducing measures against dissenters, and stimulating the furious zeal of the most intolerant section of the High Church party. A statesman is not to inquire, on accepting office, what his previous opinions may have been, for all that he has to do is, to carry on the public business in the most feasible manner. His conduct must not be too curiously scrutinized, because this is a free and aspiring country. He is to adopt sentiments that may be contrary to his own, because the people have passions, and must have leaders. The opinions and the prejudices of the community, the weight of great establishments and corporations, must have great influence over him, because he needs their support, and is of an ambitious and eminently practical character. When Mr.

Disraeli enunciated these bold maxims he was not a raw youth. He was a matured, well-read, travelled, and thinking man; he was at that time of life when men are all that they ever are. He had been a Radical three years before, and now, when the tide seemed turning, was in a curious chrysalis state, half Radical and half Conservative, courting the agriculturists and denouncing the Irish Church; and a few months afterwards he was to develop himself, amid the astonishment of the public, into a downright, thorough-going Tory. These observations on the eminently-practical character of a statesman, how he is to be permitted to adopt any vulgar opinions, pander to any vulgar passions, and serve the State, only according to its present necessities, appear very significant. They explain much that might otherwise be perplexing. And how do they appear when associated with Vivian Grey?

Mr. Disraeli, of all men, ought in his later career most carefully to have avoided gross personalities and mischievous satire. He ought, at least, to have been sensible of the many points his life affords for ridicule. He has never ridiculed any character half so ridiculous as his own. The plain statement of facts, as they are here set

down, may even pass for satire, though it is only simple, unexaggerated truth. In fact, it cannot be concealed, for it must now be sufficiently obvious, that the literary and political history of this satirical author and politician is a satire ready made. But he has thought fit to designate this period of his life as that in which he was sowing his political wild oats. Mr. Disraeli was then verging on his thirtieth year; he had written much, and experienced much. It is not to be supposed that at such an age he was permitted to sow with impunity any wild oats, political or moral. It was not for him to make such an excuse, when he had invariably appealed to the youth of England, and considered, in his full maturity, that it was a blessing for any country to be governed by its youth.

It is impossible to study this 'Crisis Examined' without being struck with the resemblance that this early speech has to many of Mr. Disraeli's latest productions. It is alone sufficient to prove that there has been no wonderful psychological change in his character. How like his present witty vein are these sentences from his High Wycombe address, a very slight acquaintance with the debates of the last two or three sessions of Parliament will enable

every person to be convinced. They are in the very style of his bombastic perorations, which really mean nothing. "Paris," he said, "decides upon the fate of France; but I hope we may continue to receive our morning papers by the Oxford coach without acknowledging a ukase in every leading article, and recognising a revolution in every riot." This is just like the antithetical denunciations of the Manchester men in the speech on Mr. Gladstone's budget, when he said that the Radicals desired to convert a first-rate empire into a second-rate republic. With the same happy antithetical tone Disraeli the Younger declares himself "in favour of measures, not men, and for the simple reason that, for four years, we have had men and not measures." This is applied against the ministry who introduced the great Reform measure, and the bold Appropriation Clause. Whether bad or good, these measures might have been considered sweeping enough in all conscience. Pointing to Messrs. Bright and Cobden, Mr. Disraeli declared, in 1848, "These are the representatives of peace and plenty amid a starving people, and a world in arms." In the High Wycombe address, in the same style, Disraeli the Younger exclaims: "The Whigs opened busi-

ness with Peace, Reform, and Retrenchment. I say at once their Peace consists of blockades, their Reform of the creation of commissionerships, and their Retrenchments of the cutting down of clerks." These extracts are surely sufficient to establish Mr. Disraeli's intellectua] identity. They, and still more the clever tirades with which this speech concludes, are unquestionable evidences against the theory of pyrotechnical development, which some people suppose to have taken place in his mental organisation, that Disraeli the Younger and the present leader of the Opposition might be considered as all but different beings. "The Whigs," said he, in the town hall of High Wycombe, after the last humorous sally, "plunged you into a revolution. For what? To take the duty off stone bottles!" Then the reform ministry is compared to Mr. Ducrow, in the most elaborate satirical vein, and whether decorous or not, left his hearers in such convulsions of laughter, that even Mr. Ducrow's best clown could not have been more effective. It would be a pity to curtail such an excellent specimen of Mr. Disraeli's wit in his aspiring days, it is therefore quoted in full. "The Reform Ministry! I dare say now, some of you have

heard of Mr. Ducrow, that celebrated gentleman, who rides on six horses. What a prodigious achievement! It seems impossible, but you have confidence in Ducrow! You fly to witness it unfortunately one of the horses is ill, and a donkey is substituted in its place. But Ducrow is still admirable: there he is bounding along in spangled jacket and cork slippers! The whole town is mad to see Ducrow riding at the same time on six horses: but now two more of the steeds are seized with the staggers, and lo! three jackasses in their stead! Still Ducrow persists, and still announces to the public that he will ride round his circus every night on his six steeds. At last all the horses are knocked up, and now there are half-a-dozen donkeys. What a change! Behold the hero in the amphitheatre, the spangled jacket thrown on one side, the cork slippers on the other. Puffing, panting, and perspiring he pokes one sullen brute, thwacks another, cuffs a third, and curses a fourth, while one brays to the audience, and another rolls in the saw-dust. Behold the late Prime Minister and the Reform Ministry! The spirited and snow-white steeds have gradually changed into an equal number of sullen and obstinate donkeys. While Mr. Merryman, who, like the Lord Chancellor, was once the very life of the ring, now lies his despairing

length in the middle of the stage, with his jokes exhausted, and his bottle empty."

This is certainly a clever piece of abuse. There is nothing very noble in it indeed, but there is much of that peculiar talent that distinguishes Mr. Disraeli's most successful speeches. If the end of oratory be to make people laugh, certainly he is the most accomplished of orators.

On his next appearance before the public, he was quite as amusing, as in this 'Crisis Examined;' but unfortunately the amusement was all at his own expense.

Five months after this performance in the town-hall at High Wycombe when Mr. Disraeli was still coquetting with the two extreme parties, he posted down to Taunton, on the formation of the Melbourne administration, for the purpose of opposing Mr. Labouchere, who had accepted the office of Master of the Mint. Mr. Disraeli now came forth a regular Tory. All his Radical professions were thrown to the winds by this champion of the Taunton "Blues."

Considering how lately he had contested elections, delivered speeches, and written addresses under different auspices, it would at least have been prudent in him not to have abused his former friends. But O'Connell was in bad re-

pute at Taunton; he had many friends at High Wycombe. Thus, in the December of 1834, Mr. Disraeli declared that the very name of tithes must be abolished in Ireland before another year passed away; and in the April of 1835, at Taunton, denounced O'Connell as a "bloody traitor." In 1832, the Irish agitator's conduct was much more unconstitutional than in 1835, yet Mr. Disraeli had at that time even canvassed a constituency with a printed recommendation from O'Connell, and, in 1835, upbraided the Whigs for having anything to do with the Roman Catholic champion. Even Mr. Disraeli's best friends must admit that such conduct was inexcusable, and that the terrible castigation he drew upon himself was not altogether undeserved. It was, surely, not more blamable in the Whigs to accept the support of O'Connell, than for Mr. Disraeli to ask the votes of the Wycombe electors through O'Connell's recommendation. Yet, on the nomination day at Taunton, he said, "I look upon the Whigs as a weak, but ambitious party, who can only obtain power by linking themselves to a traitor." He continued, "I ought to apologise to the admirers of Mr. O'Connell, perhaps, for this hard language. I am myself his admirer as far as his talents and abilities are concerned. But I maintain him to

be a traitor; and on what authority? On the authority of that very body, a distinguished member of whom is my honourable opponent."

Mr. Disraeli then enunciated one of those daring historical paradoxes, which are so singularly characteristic of the man. "Twenty years ago," said the Taunton Blue hero, "tithes were paid in Ireland more regularly than rent is in England now!"

Even his supporters appeared astounded by this declaration.

"How do you know?" shouted an elector.

"I have read it," replied Mr. Disraeli.

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed the elector.

"I know it," retorted Mr. Disraeli, "because I have read, and you," looking daggers at his questioner, "have not."

This was considered a very happy rejoinder by the friends of the candidate, and was loudly cheered by the Blues.

"Didn't you write a novel?" again asked the importunate elector, not very much frightened even by Mr. Disraeli's oratorical thunder, and the sardonical expression on his face.

"I have certainly written a novel," Mr. Disraeli replied; "but I hope there is no disgrace in being connected with literature."

"You are a curiosity of literature, you are," said the humorous elector.

"I hope," said Mr. Disraeli, with great indignation, "there is no disgrace in having written that which has been read by hundreds of thousands of my fellow-countrymen, and which has been translated into every European language. I trust that one who is an author by the gift of nature, may be as good a man as one who is Master of the Mint, by the gift of Lord Melbourne." Great applause then burst forth from the Blues. Mr. Disraeli continued, "I am not, however, the puppet of the Duke of Buckingham as one newspaper has described me; while a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard designated me the next morning, 'the Marylebone Radical.' If there is anything on which I figure myself, it is my consistency."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed many hearers.

"I am prepared to prove it," said Mr. Disraeli, with menacing energy. "I am prepared to prove it, and always shall be, either in the House of Commons or on the hustings, considering the satisfactory manner in which I have been attacked, but I do not think the attack will be repeated."

He was mistaken. The attack was repeated, and in a style which at once drew the attention of

all the empire on Mr. Disraeli. The newspapers containing the reports of the proceedings at the Taunton election soon conveyed over to Ireland the abuse of O'Connell, and came, of course, to the knowledge of the man whom Mr. Disraeli had stigmatised as a "bloody traitor." At a meeting of the Franchise Association, in Dublin, O'Connell delivered an invective against his assailant, such as perhaps has never been surpassed for its determined scolding and broad humour. The sarcastic allusion to Mr. Disraeli's Hebrew descent has not passed into oblivion. It is impossible, indeed, to approve of O'Connell's vindictive and unscrupulous retaliation. Still it is only fair to remember that Mr. Disraeli was the first assailant; and when a man has been called a traitor, and his political associates upbraided for having anything to do with such an incendiary, he is not likely to hesitate in the choice of the weapons he employs to defend himself. If anything could excuse O'Connell's fierce rejoinder, it is, that he had afforded assistance to Mr. Disraeli; and it afterwards appeared, that only a week or two before the Taunton election, Mr. Disraeli had spoken in the highest terms of him, and had sent him his kind remembrances. The speech itself is an excellent specimen of O'Connell's coarse but effective oratory.

He began by saying that he was not much surprised at the Tories resorting to him for lack of argument; but he was really astonished at the attack just made upon him by Mr. Disraeli. In 1832 the borough of High Wycombe became vacant, and though Mr. Disraeli was not acquainted personally with Mr. O'Connell, he obtained an introduction to him, and wrote him a letter asking for his support as a Radical reformer. Mr. O'Connell composed him the best letter he could write; Mr. Disraeli had it printed and placarded through the streets of High Wycombe, and it was, in fact, the ground upon which he canvassed the borough. Mr. Disraeli was defeated, but that was not the fault of Mr. O'Connell; and though gratitude might not be expected from this unsuccessful candidate, surely, if he had any feeling at all, he would have considered that a service had been done him, and that it ought not to be repaid by the foulest atrocity. Yet at Taunton this "miscreant has styled me an incendiary. Why, I was a greater incendiary then," O'Connell continued, "than I am at present, if I ever were one; and if I am so, he is doubly so for having employed me. Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to that is—he is a liar. He is a liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie!"

After some more strong observations of the same kind, O'Connell said, "Mr. Disraeli is just the man who, if Sir Robert Peel had been abroad when he was called upon to take office, would have undertaken to supply his place." Then remarking that Mr. Disraeli was descended from the Hebrew race, O'Connell thus concluded his elaborate invective: "Mr. Disraeli's name shows that he is a Jew. His father became a convert. He is the better for that in this world; and I hope, of course, he will be the better for it in the next. There is a habit of underrating that great and oppressed nation, the Jews. They are cruelly persecuted by persons calling themselves Christians, but no person was ever yet a Christian who persecuted. The cruellest persecution they suffer is upon their character, by the false names their calumniators bestowed upon them, before they carried their atrocities into effect. They feel the persecutions of calumny severer upon them than the persecution of actual torture. I have the happiness to be acquainted with some Jewish families in London, and, amongst them, more accomplished ladies, or more humane, cordial, high-minded, or better-educated gentlemen, I have never met. It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Mr. Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, that I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen

people of God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also, and it must certainly have been from one of those that Disraeli is descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief, whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. For aught I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died on the cross."

Such abuse as this it is impossible to sympathize with; but as Mr. Disraeli had made the first attack, it would have been well for him not to respond again in the same manner. Nobody gains by abuse; still less was there any chance of getting any honour from such an unscrupulous master of scurrility as O'Connell.

But Lord Alvanley had just fought a duel with Mr. Morgan O'Connell, and the newspapers of the day were full of Lord Alvanley's heroism. There was now an opportunity for Mr. Disraeli to reap the same laurels, have his name associated with that of Lord Alvanley in the daily newspapers, and placed very prominently before the public. He immediately sent a letter to Mr. Morgan O'Connell, requesting him to "resume the vicarious

office of yielding satisfaction for the insults which your father has long lavished with impunity upon his political opponents." He denied having used the expressions for which O'Connell had so outrageously insulted him. These expressions, however, appear not only in the reports of all the London newspapers, but also in those of the local papers of the county.

Mr. Morgan O'Connell declined to answer for any language his father might use. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, set about composing an epistle to his great assailant, and endeavoured to surpass him in abuse. This was very ill-judged. It is difficult for any man to be remarkably satirical when he is in a passion, and the agitator was not one who could be effectively overcome by mere vituperation. But Mr. Disraeli determined at the same time to defend his consistency and to crush his adversary. The letter is certainly a most extraordinary effort, and an extraordinary effort was required.

Mr. Disraeli commenced:—

"Mr. O'Connell.—Although you have long placed yourself out of the pale of civilization, still I am one who will not be insulted even by a Yahoo, without chastising it. When I read this morning in the same journal your violent attack upon myself, and that your son was at the same

moment paying the penalty of similar virulence to another individual on whom you had dropped your filth, I thought that the consciousness that your opponents had at length discovered a source of satisfaction might have animated your insolence to unwonted energy; and I called upon your son to resume his vicarious office of yielding satisfaction for his shrinking sire." After declaring that the report of the speech on which Mr. O'Connell's attack had been grounded was garbled, and scarcely contained a sentence as it came from his mouth, Mr. Disraeli then undertakes a regular defence of his political conduct.

In 1831 he came forward as the opponent of the Whigs, who in the ensuing year denounced Mr. O'Connell as a traitor from the throne, and had been by him in return anathematized. Mr. O'Connell was now the patron of these men; Mr. Disraeli was still their determined assailant; which of the two, then, was the most consistent? Mr. Disraeli's conscience acquitted him "of ever having deserted a political friend, or ever having changed a political opinion." He endeavoured in 1831 to restore the balance of parties, and if he advocated different measures now than he did then, it was because that great result had been obtained. For this object he in 1831 would have laboured with Mr. O'Connell, who was known to despise and hate the Whigs.

Mr. Disraeli had only met Mr. O'Connell once, but had a lively recollection of the interview. "I had an ample opportunity of studying your character. I thought you a very amusing, a very interesting, but a somewhat over-rated man." Mr. Disraeli had acknowledged that he was not a sentimental, but a practical politician. What he chiefly desired to see was a strong Government; but he was convinced that if the Whigs remained in office, the State would be shipwrecked. The Whigs, therefore, were to be got rid of at any price. Mr. O'Connell seemed to be of the same opinion, but the conversation was general. "We formed no political alliance," said Mr. Disraeli, "and for a simple reason—I concealed neither from yourself, nor from your friends, that the repeal of the Union was an impassable barrier between us." After a few more observations against the Whigs, Mr. Disraeli winds up his letter in these terms, and ventures on a memorable prophecy:—

"With regard to your taunts as to my want of success in my election contests, permit me to remind you that I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. No threatening skeletons canvassed for me; a death's head and cross-bones were not blazoned on my banners. My pecuniary resources, too, were limited. I am not one of those public beggars that we see swarming

with their obtrusive boxes in the chapels of your creed, nor am I possessor of a princely revenue wrung from a starving race of fanatical slaves. Nevertheless, I have a deep conviction that the hour is at hand when I shall be more successful, and take my place in that proud assembly of which Mr. O'Connell avows his wish no longer to be a member. I expect to be a representative of the people before the repeal of the Union. We shall meet at Philippi; and rest assured that, confident in a good cause, and in some energies which have been not altogether unimproved, I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will at the same time make you remember and repent the insults that you have lavished upon Benjamin Disraeli."

The proud boast of meeting O'Connell at Philippi was much ridiculed at the time, and Mr. Disraeli's vindication of his consistency was scarcely thought worthy of notice. No person cared whether he was consistent or inconsistent. How could "such a silly young gentleman, who has such a violent passion for notoriety," said one daily newspaper, which, singularly enough is the only one of the liberal organs that now worships Mr. Disraeli as much as it formerly ridiculed him, "ever expect sensible people to pay the least attention to his vain platitudes?" The question of Mr. Disraeli's consistency cannot

now be considered of little consequence, and the very newspaper which then treated him with such contempt, was indignant that people should last year question his financial pre-eminence. Thus it ever is. A struggling genius may be well assured that those who most insult him during the stern season of his obscurity, will be most ready to cringe to him in the day of his power. He may thus estimate the value of those exaggerated eulogies in the season of his prosperity, by the equally exaggerated contempt in the period of neglect and probation.

Mr. Disraeli affirmed that he had never deserted a political friend, nor changed a political opinion, because, though he once stood upon the radical interest, and advocated the abolition of tithes, the vote by ballot, and triennial parliaments, and was now on the Tory interest, and "not disposed to press" any of those extreme measures, yet he had invariably continued the uncompromising opponent of the Whigs. But surely two opposite extremes cannot be considered perfectly consistent. If he was at one time far to the east, and at another time far to the west, and had always kept himself at an equal distance from an object in the middle, it does not follow that he had not changed his position. There are people who live at the antipodes, although they may be in corresponding degrees of the opposite

part of the globe. It was indeed putting a bold face on the matter, with the address to the electors of Marylebone in existence, to declare that he had never changed a political opinion. Mr. Disraeli had, it appears, never changed a political opinion, although he had declared exactly two years ago, that unless the ballot and triennial parliaments were conceded, he could not conceive how the legislature could ever be in harmony with the people; but had now abandoned those measures. He had never deserted a political friend; although he had canvassed High Wycombe with the recommendation of O'Connell in his hand, and had just declared him to be a traitor and an incendiary. He had never swerved from his consistency; although he had told the Marylebone electors two years ago, that in all revisions of taxation the interests of the great metropolitan constituencies ought to be greatly regarded; and a few months ago, at High Wycombe, had said that in all financial changes the agricultural interest ought most especially to be considered. He had never swerved from his political friends; although he had been so much a Radical at Marylebone that he asked for Mr. Hume's support, and had just contested Taunton as the representative of the Duke of Buckingham and the Carlton Club.

If there be no inconsistency in thus appealing for support to such opposite political sections, and advocating such opposite measures, it is obvious there can be no such thing as inconsistency, and politicians may just be permitted to do as they please.

The English people ever take a practical and common-sense view both of men and measures. Sir Robert Peel was more endeared to the great body of the people even by his changes of opinion; because they saw that he was sincere and earnest in his inconsistency, and meant well by the nation of which he was the ruler. In him they did not think inconsistency disgraceful, for he was, like themselves, at one time for protection and at length for free trade. But Mr. Disraeli would not admit himself to be inconsistent; "there was nothing he so much figured himself for as for his consistency." The multitude looked at deeds and not at mere words, although Mr. Disraeli's words were as contradictory as words could be; and in 1835 the rank he held in the estimation of his countrymen was little to be envied.

He did not know his own interest. He would not be quiet. All the furious letters he wrote to the O'Connells were immediately communicated by himself to the public. They breathed the fury of Contarini Fleming against Grimani Del-

fini. They are in the very style of the soliloquy in the psychological romance. He spoke of nothing but vengeance in the style of a romantic Italian bravo.

After having addressed his elaborate epistle to O'Connell, he immediately wrote another letter to his son, expressing the hope that as he had endeavoured to insult the father to the utmost, the insult would be resented. "I wished to express," said Mr. Disraeli, "the utter scorn in which I hold your father's character, and the disgust with which his conduct inspires me. If I failed in conveying this expression of my feelings to him, let me now more successfully express them to you. I shall take every opportunity of holding your father's name up to public contempt; and I fervently pray that you or some of his blood may attempt to avenge the unextinguishable hatred with which I shall pursue his existence."

This letter was immediately published by the gentleman to whom it was addressed. Mr. Disraeli denied that he ever was a member of the Westminster reform club. The secretary soon after sent two of Mr. Disraeli's letters to the 'Morning Chronicle,' and it plainly appeared that he had been chosen a member, and had been at the club. Another letter, the authen-

ticity of which was never disputed, nor were the facts it asserted ever contradicted, was the following:—

"*To the Editor of the 'Morning Chronicle.'*

"SIR,

"HAVING just read a paragraph in your paper in which it is stated that Mr. Disraeli had, in his speech to the electors at Taunton, denounced Mr. O'Connell as an incendiary and traitor, and so forth, I beg leave to say that I think the learned author of 'Vivian Grey' must have been misrepresented; because I can scarcely believe it possible that he could have applied such epithets to Mr. O'Connell, of whom he has, within *the last month*, spoken to me in terms of the most extravagant admiration, and at the same time, requested me to communicate to Mr. O'Connell at the first opportunity his kind remembrance of him, which I accordingly did.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your very obedient Servant,

"D. RONAYNE.

"Ardsallagh, May 3rd, 1833."

No unfortunate electioneering candidate was ever before placed in such an unhappy position. Defeated over and over again by Radical and Tory

constituencies; laughed at for his want of success; denounced as the descendant of the impenitent thief; his challenges insultingly refused; accused of the grossest perfidy, it would seem that nothing remained for Mr. Disraeli to do but to throw himself over Waterloo Bridge, and drown all his miseries in the Thames. Even his greatest admirers can say nothing in defence of his proceedings at this period. Yet a charitable interpretation of human actions is generally wise and right. Whatever differences of opinion there may be on Mr. Disraeli's political and literary career, still he is a gentleman, a man of honour, and a man of lofty aspirations, with great intellectual abilities. The author of this book cannot therefore believe that Mr. Disraeli's conduct was such as even his friends have admitted it to be, and after much consideration of all the circumstances, would offer, before dismissing the subject, some explanation of these perplexing and even painful statements.

It is in the first place clear that Mr. Disraeli had mentioned O'Connell, according to the letter just given, with respect, only a very short time before the Taunton election. It is not therefore to be supposed that he could have meditated a deliberate attack on the eminent politician to whom he had sent his kind remembrances.

When he went down to Taunton, and was fairly embarked in the exciting contest, his ardent temperament perhaps induced him to apply some taunts to his opponent, who was a prominent Whig minister. The Whigs were then, certainly, on good terms with O'Connell. Party spirit ran very high. It was then a clever electioneering manœuvre for Mr. Disraeli to accuse Mr. Labouchere of grasping the hand of a man whom the Whigs themselves had at one time stigmatised and defied. Mr. Disraeli probably went on to say some bitter things about O'Connell himself, without at all expecting that the agitator, who was then in Ireland, would ever hear of them, and never supposing for an instant that the abusive epithets of the moment would be considered a direct attack.

The proceedings at Taunton were however very fully reported in the newspapers, and Mr. Disraeli's speech reads somewhat violent. O'Connell saw it, and being perhaps stimulated by his flatterers, of whom he had always a great number, pronounced the awful invective that drove the object of it almost furious. It is very erroneous to believe that Mr. Disraeli is always prudent in his speeches. He is very often induced to say more than he means, by that love of effect and violent contrast for which he is distinguished. Hence,

when taunted with being a member of the Westminster reform club, he denied that he had been one of the body, though he had been elected, and had even called, as was shown by his own letters, to pay his subscription, when the secretary was over in Ireland. On that officer's return, the subscription was in arrear; and when applied to as a defaulter Mr. Disraeli offered to send a draft for the sum, but at the same time requested his name to be taken from the books. The subscription was not accepted, and he had no more connection with the institution.

This mental reservation certainly did not justify the newspaper scurrilities of which he was the mark. But the association of 'Vivian Grey' clung to him, and has had a pernicious influence on his career. Had he really been so bad as some of his assailants said he was, he would not have made himself quite so ridiculous. He always believed himself fully capable of triumphantly governing the empire. What he said in 'Coningsby' he devoutly believed, about juvenile heroes. The fact is, an English statesman cannot spring at once into life and action, like Minerva from the head of Jove. Our favourite ministers are of the Elizabethan stamp; we respect the "statesmen old in bearded

majesty." And there can be no question that in this respect we act wisely. But no person can peruse Mr. Disraeli's letters to O'Connell without perceiving that, in the interviews of which he writes, he seriously considered himself at once, on his return from the East, on equal terms with the mighty demagogue who had so long been leading his fellow-countrymen in their religious and political struggle, and bearding the stubborn protestantism of England. Mr. Disraeli says, "We formed no political alliance;" "what I wanted to see was a strong Government;" "the Whigs must be got rid of at any price," as though in 1832 the whole destinies of England depended upon Mr. Disraeli, and as though his alliance with O'Connell would have had a very powerful influence. He was not then a member of Parliament, and had had scarcely anything to do with real politics when he thus talked of his alliance with the Irish leader.

Though Mr. Disraeli was, as he himself may be now prepared to admit, indiscreet, self-confident, and audacious in the highest degree, it would be wrong to adopt the contemptuous language of his assailants in 1835, or to quote O'Connell's invective without reprehension. The success which has attended Mr. Disraeli's later efforts must, in some degree, justify even the pre-

tensions of his earlier years. After his defeat at Taunton, and his newspaper war with O'Connell, he set himself to study political philosophy, and determined to prove that the Tory party was really the democratic party; and thus become the great expounder of Toryism to the reforming generations of the nineteenth century.

While the abusive epithets which had been applied to him were in everybody's mouth, and his furious letters on the subject in every daily newspaper, he was seen on one occasion pacing the Opera colonnade at half-past twelve o'clock at night, accompanied by Lord Lyndhurst, with whom he was talking with great fluency, and gesticulating with much vehemence. The subjects of this midnight perambulation, as the foolish people of the great metropolis were unconsciously snoring in their beds in happy forgetfulness of all political creeds and systems, were the great principles of Toryism. Genius must be awake, while mediocrity is sleeping.

CHAPTER VI.

The fruits of this modern peripateticism soon appeared. Mr. Disraeli now started up under a new character. He became the vindicator of the English constitution, at the request of his great friend, Lord Lyndhurst, who had been seen as his companion in these midnight rambles under the Opera colonnade, when the glories of Toryism, and the abominations of Whiggism, had been pointed out with such peculiar energy by the younger of the two peripatetics as to arrest the attention of the solitary stragglers who happened to be passing by at that very late or very early hour, when all respectable mediocrities ought to be in bed.

The 'Vindication of the English Constitution, in a Letter to a noble and learned Lord, by Disraeli the Younger,' occupies no less than two

hundred and ten octavo pages. It commences in the manner of Lord Bolingbroke, with, "Your lordship has honoured me with a wish that some observations which I have made in conversation on the character of our constitution, might be expressed in a more formal and more public manner;" and the author "my lord's" it, and "your lordship's" it, throughout the treatise, in the very style of his great master. Mr. Disraeli goes scampering along through the first sixty pages, eloquently declaiming against abstract rights, theoretical constitutions, and revolutionary propagandists; eulogising Magna Charta, the Petition of Right, and the Declaration of Right; panegyrising Selden, Lord Somers, and Sir Edward Coke; and driving in headlong rout before him Thomas Aquinas and the schoolmen, Mr. Bentham and the utilitarians. Few Englishmen of any party will be inclined to differ with his constitutional eloquence in the earlier part of the work; they can only wonder why it should thus appear under the name of Disraeli the Younger in 1835; for it was said even more eloquently and more philosophically by Burke, in his 'Reflections on the French Revolution,' published in 1790, when there really was novelty and originality in such a theme.

But it is very seldom that a diligent political

student, whatever may be his constitutional opinions, will be able to read seventy pages of a book by Mr. Disraeli with entire assent. The author alludes to the Reform Bill, which his friend so vehemently opposed; and to the establishment of the throne of the barricades, the news of which came to him, as he informs his noble correspondent, while under the shadow of the pyramids. He makes two or three not very complimentary allusions to M. Guizot, for writing our annals, and editing our political memoirs, but who, it appears, "is a striking instance that a man may be very knowing without being very wise."

Mr. Disraeli then gives the history of the House of Commons, and, greatly to his own satisfaction, comes to the conclusion that the lower house is only an equestrian chamber; that it never was the house of the people, and that it is not the house of the people. But if the House of Commons is thus proved to have had a very narrow origin, the House of Lords gets not much better treatment from the pen of our constitutional vindicator; for he declares, that "it would not be too much to affirm that the law of England does not recognise nobility."

Surprising as some of these eloquent constitutional paragraphs may be, only a pugnacious

reader will be disposed to quarrel with the first half of this 'Vindication.' It can only be regretted that, as the origin and history of the House of Commons are great antiquarian and historical questions, Mr. Disraeli never thought it necessary to indicate authorities, or any evidence whatever, for his somewhat declamatory and dogmatical decisions. He must know that his opinions are not undisputed; and that, until he can offer authentic evidence of their truth, they can only be regarded as the pleadings of an ingenious writer, who wishes to establish a very singular theory. Bolingbroke had the same habit of deciding on every great question in the same authoritative manner, and of representing his own notions as undoubted facts. Most of his doctrines are now exploded; and, assuredly, the progress of historical knowledge has been so great, and the researches of our historical students so extensive since the time of the dogmatical St. John, that not even Mr. Disraeli can think that every one will bow to his mere opinions on such a weighty question as the authenticity of the title-deeds to English freedom. But he really seems to have thought, when composing this 'Vindication,' that he had nothing to do but to declare his opinion, to have it immediately received as unquestionable

authority; for throughout the book there is not a single reference given.

After having endeavoured to show us the origin of our parliament, the author comes to the times of Charles the First, and finds an exact parallel between the condition of England then, and the condition of England in 1835. Who does not recognise Bolingbroke's manner in the following sentences? "Am I indeed treating of the reign of Charles the First? or is it some nearer epoch that I am commemorating? Am I writing of the affairs of the seventeenth or the nineteenth century? There is such a marvellous similarity between the two periods, that for my part I find great difficulty in discriminating between the two Dromios." At both periods Mr. Disraeli finds that the Church of England was the great victim; at both periods the great majority of the people were warmly attached to the Establishment; at both periods the daring rebels leagued with conspirators in other countries: in the time of Charles the First, Hampden and Pym united with the Scotch presbyterians, and adopted their solemn league and covenant, and in the year 1835, Lord John Russell and the Marquis of Lansdowne united with the Irish papists and adopted their Church scheme. England was, Mr. Disraeli says, as prosperous in the time of

Charles the First as in the time of William the Fourth; nay, he even boldly says, that he very much doubts whether the influence of the press was not as great at one period as at the other.

It would be fruitless, of course, to spend time in commenting on such a strange paradox. If the Church of England is as much loved now as it was in the seventeenth century, it is certain that the influence of the pulpit must be as great now as it was then; but is Ireland in the same condition now, as Scotland was two centuries ago? Scotland was then an independent nation, and therefore the intrigues of the English patriots, with their Scotch brethren in the faith, could only be justified by the simple fact, which our constitutional vindicator finds it very convenient to forget, that Charles the First was looking as much for assistance to the Irish papists, as the English parliamentarians were to their friends in the north; but Ireland is now united to England on equal terms, and the Irish representatives have as good a right to act with an English political party as the representatives of the other two kingdoms. What an inconsistency is this! To brand the Irish Roman Catholics as foreigners, so that it is disgraceful for the Whigs to have anything

to do with them, and yet to upbraid them for wishing the Union to be repealed! To anathematise the Whigs for looking for support to the Irish Roman Catholics in the nineteenth century, and at the same time to uphold Charles the First as a blessed martyr for seeking the support of the Irish Roman Catholics of the seventeenth century, while Hampden and Pym were traitors for combining with the Scotch Protestants! It might be excusable for Mr. Disraeli in this constitutional treatise to call O'Connell "the very absurd and over-rated rebel, vomiting insolence in language as mean as his own soul;" but he ought not grossly to misrepresent historical facts, for it is on such facts that all the value of a work on the English constitution must depend.

It is not until the political student has got through two-thirds of the 'Vindication' that its real object appears. Byron wrote dramas for the purpose of bringing in two or three pointed sentences, and Mr. Disraeli has written volumes for the purpose of showing that Lord John Russell and his colleagues endeavoured to make themselves Venetian nobles. About the one hundred and fiftieth page, the Doge theory is coolly expounded, and it is only then that the book becomes really interesting and original. All the eloquent declamation about abstract rights, popular

assemblies, peers and bishops, may be very fine composition, but it might have been written in a prize essay at college, or delivered in some constitutional debating club, quite as appropriately as addressed to such an active lawyer and politician as Lord Lyndhurst.

But it is when the Whigs are to be represented as deliberately conspiring to make their sovereign a Venetian Doge, that the author boldly sets all history and all induction at defiance. He admits, what even many Whigs would be inclined to question, that the English Revolution did not establish the parliament in greater power in the time of William the Third than it really possessed in the reign of Henry the Fourth; but he then boldly affirms that the Whigs formed a deliberate design of enslaving their monarch. "The Whigs under George the First, in pursuance of this plan of reducing the English monarch to the character of a Venetian Doge, succeeded in carrying a bill through the Upper House to deprive the king of his prerogative of creating peers, and thus to convert the free and democratic peerage of England into an odious oligarchy of exclusive privilege; but the House of Commons, led by the Tory country gentlemen, reinforced by some unexpected allies, rejected the proposition with becoming decision."

Now Mr. Disraeli, in his office as a vindicator of the English constitution might be permitted to form any theory, but he was bound at least to represent facts, and especially historical facts, as they really were. Historical facts are to the political philosopher, what experiments are to the natural philosopher; and for the advancement of all sound knowledge, a fair representation of the facts on which a constitutional theory is founded, must be as indispensable as careful experiments on the properties of chemical bodies are for the discovery of chemical laws. If the very fact on which Mr. Disraeli bases his grand Doge theory, be quite misrepresented, what becomes of the theory itself?

The slightest acquaintance with history will be sufficient to convince any candid person that the celebrated Peerage Bill of the time of George the First was not a measure introduced by the great Whig party for the purpose of establishing their ascendency, and that it was not defeated by the Tory country gentlemen. It would just be as fair to say that it was the work of the Tory party, because a Tory duke was really the ostensible introducer of the Bill into the House of Lords in 1719, as to say that it was part of a preconcerted scheme of the Whigs for securing their power, because it was projected

by Sunderland. Had it been really a deliberate Whig measure for securing the government to their political section, it is natural to suppose that it would have been at least unanimously supported by the Whig party. Now what are really the facts of the case? So far from the Bill being supported unanimously by the Whigs, it gave rise to such dissension in their ranks, that the two great Whig authors, Steele and Addison, took different sides on the question; and it was opposed, and at length defeated, not by the Tory country gentlemen, but by Sir Robert Walpole, the Whig statesman, whom Mr. Disraeli would consider the representative of this Venetian party. Walpole's speech against the Bill has always been represented as one of the greatest masterpieces of English oratory; and it was thrown out by an overwhelming majority, owing to his influence in the House of Commons, where the discomfited Tories were a very small number. The measure was devised by Sunderland solely for his own personal interests, but it was supported by many honest, though short-sighted patriots, because the royal prerogative had been so unwarrantably exerted by the late ministers in swamping the House of Peers. This was one of the articles in Oxford's impeachment. The royal prerogative

had been grossly abused by Bolingbroke and his confederates; and gross abuses naturally produce violent remedies.

Lord Mahon is the most recent historian of this period. He is by principle a conservative, and was, in 1835, in the same party as Mr. Disraeli, and as much a follower of Lord Lyndhurst. He will not be suspected of any partiality for the Venetian system. On such a subject he is therefore an unexceptionable witness. Does he say that the Peerage Bill originated in a Whig conspiracy for making the sovereign a Doge? Does he say that it was defeated principally by the Tory country gentlemen? "The creation of twelve peers," says Lord Mahon, "to establish a majority of the court, had been justly reprobated in Lord Oxford's administration, and had formed an article in his impeachment. It was the remembrance of that outrage which first gave rise to the project of limiting the king's prerogative in the creation of peers." So far from thinking that the Bill was defeated by the Tories, this conservative historian says, "The Tories would no doubt oppose it; but, the Whigs had a vast majority;" and again, "If we next inquire, to whom the praise of defeating this measure is most due, there can,

I think, be no doubt that it belongs almost solely and exclusively to Walpole."

Thus the fact on which Mr. Disraeli founds his paradoxical theory is contradicted, not only by such an eminent constitutional writer as Mr. Hallam, but even by a Tory historian of singular moderation and fairness. When Mr. Disraeli says that the Whigs in 1718 endeavoured to swamp the House of Commons, and in 1835 endeavoured to swamp the House of Lords, he forgets that the only minister who ever really had recourse to what he terms such desperate expedients was Bolingbroke, the Tory genius whom Mr. Disraeli so much admires. It was, says this constitutional vindicator, "a most desperate expedient" for the Whigs of the Reform Bill ever to entertain the least intention of carrying their great popular measure by swamping the House of Lords. It is sufficient, according to the same high authority, to brand them for ever as Venetian oligarchists, because a section of their party introduced the Peerage Bill in George the First's reign, although it was defeated by the same party in the House of Commons. But he considers that there was nothing wrong in Bolingbroke really swamping the House of Lords, a few years before, although it was done in such a manner, and for such an

object, that it has been reprobated by Englishmen of every party. The Whigs were, according to Mr. Disraeli, shameful aristocrats for ever meditating that, which it was great virtue and profound statesmanship in Bolingbroke to do.

Lord Mahon is so thoroughly disgusted with the Tories of Queen Anne's reign, and so decidedly opposed to the Whigs of William the Fourth's reign, that he has formed a singular theory, to the effect that the Tories of 1832 exactly resemble the Whig patriots of 1710, and that the Whigs of the Reform Bill closely resemble the unscrupulous Tories of the time of Sacheverell. Mr. Disraeli hates equally the Whigs of William the Fourth's reign, and the Whigs of Queen Anne's reign; and his theory is in direct contrast with that of Lord Mahon; for it is affirmed in this constitutional treatise that the Tories of 1835 are exactly like the Tories of the time of George the First, and that at both times they must be considered as our national saviours. Both theories are contradicted by facts; both theories are formed in utter forgetfulness of the circumstances of the two centuries; but certainly the Toryism of Lord Mahon is more intelligible than that of Mr. Disraeli.

„There was, Mr. Disraeli tells Lord Lyndhurst, one pure patriot of very exalted virtue in the last century, far superior to the Venetian Somers, Halifax, Montague, and Addison. There was one illustrious individual, gifted with a fiery imagination, an inventive genius, a creative soul, who must be regarded as the father of modern Toryism. This hero was Lord Bolingbroke. He is the great beacon that Mr. Disraeli indicates to our degenerate politicians in this degenerate age.

Of all Mr. Disraeli's paradoxes, his admiration of Bolingbroke, and his representation of him as "the father of modern Toryism," are, perhaps, the most unpleasing signs to those who believe that morality has anything to do with Toryism. Mr. Disraeli must know that Bolingbroke was an avowed unbeliever. He was not a member of the Church of England. He was not even a Protestant. He was not even a Christian. He was infidelity personified. All the worst features of the scoffing eighteenth century were united in Bolingbroke. It follows therefore, that Mr. Disraeli considers a belief in the vital truths of Christianity, much less a belief in the doctrines of the Established Church, no indispensable qualification for a leader of the modern Tory party. Has Mr. Disraeli really

reflected on the inevitable consequence of thus making Bolingbroke the Tory regenerator? What must such a sincere member of the Church of England as the venerable representative of the University of Oxford think of the Toryism of which such an immoral deist as Bolingbroke is proclaimed the father? The doctrines of Henry St. John are somewhat different from those of that other St. John who was the disciple of the Saviour of mankind. Yet it is on the faith of St. John the Apostle, and not on the unbelief of that Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, that the Church of England is founded. And is not faith in the Church of England, and faith in the sovereign of England, the terrestrial head of the Church, the cardinal point of all genuine Toryism? Toryism and infidelity, if Toryism be anything but a name, must be incompatible. How then can Mr. Disraeli consider Bolingbroke as the father of modern Toryism without virtually admitting that modern Toryism has lost its vivifying spirit? Surely Mr. Disraeli must have confounded the two St. Johns; the great apostle of Christianity, who delivered his great truths to a believing world, with the immoral and unholy Mr. Secretary St. John, who betrayed all parties and cared for none, who endeavoured

to walk in the footsteps, not of Christ, but of Alcibiades, and who wrote in his old age treatises somewhat different from the inspired compositions of the New Testament.

The extreme liberals, and even the moderate reformers of the age, declare that the Tories defend institutions which have lost their spirit; but it would be difficult to imagine how new life is to be put into them, by such a prophet as Bolingbroke, who never considered the Church of England anything but a political machine, who was always declaiming against the clergy, who ridiculed the old cavaliers for believing that monarchy was more sacred than any other political institution, who professed ostentatiously to disregard the wisdom of past ages, and whose writings contain the germ of all those wild speculations which, under the name of philosophy, have undermined all the foundations of society. Whatever may be the true principles of Toryism, and whoever may be its great apostle, the works of this man must contain false principles, and he must be an unlawful father indeed of anything worthy of being called modern Toryism. Whoever may be right, surely Bolingbroke was wrong. Wherever may be truth, surely here is falsehood.

So far from the Tories owing a debt of gratitude

to Bolingbroke, he, by precept and example, has done more to shake the faith of the people in their glorious and venerable institutions, than any man who has ever meddled with English politics. Whenever the utility of oaths and tests of all kind has been questioned, Bolingbroke has always been cited as a great and glaring instance of a man who could take any oath, conform to any establishment, profess any doctrine, make any declaration of faith, be at heart no believer in the Church of England, and even no Christian; something less than a deist, and not better than an atheist; and yet one who could rise to eminence as a leader of the Tory party, constitute himself a champion of the Church, and be the official author of measures depriving better people than himself of the rights of English citizens. England has reason to be proud of the old cavaliers, with their leaders, Falkland, Clarendon, and Ormond. Every generous politician, whatever may be his opinions, must respect the principles for which these men fought, suffered, and died. But what is there to respect, what is there to love, in the life and principles of Bolingbroke?

Mr. Disraeli has called him "the much-injured Bolingbroke." But what were the motives of those who wronged him? They who injured him

were not merely his political opponents; men of all parties have condemned him; Whigs and Tories, Jacobites and Hanoverians, the Pretender, and the two Georges, equally believed him unworthy of confidence. If all this proceeded from prejudice or want of knowledge, never was a man so unfortunate as Bolingbroke. The world knew well that he professed to be a sincere and disinterested patriot; the good he did was certainly not done by stealth; for he never wrote a pamphlet on the affairs of his time, without ostentatiously dwelling on his own wrongs and persecutions, and on the malice and corruption of his enemies. If ever the squabbles of life could be forgotten, they might, and, should be, when a man is making his last will and testament; but even in his will, written when he was tottering on the verge of the grave, when he had but a few days to live, and nothing but a dark and cheerless prospect was before him, Bolingbroke could not forbear descanting on "the injustice and treachery of persons nearest to me, the negligence of friends, and the infidelity of servants."

That he believed himself to be a very ill-used man, there can be no question. All the world were his foes. His enemies were ever putting traps to ensnare him. According to him, mankind were divided into two classes; the one a

very small, but very select circle, consisting of Lord Bolingbroke's friends; the other a very large, but a very corrupt multitude, who could not conscientiously be his friends, were not prepared to be his tools, and therefore supported those whom he regarded as his enemies. Bolingbroke piously believed that Englishmen had degenerated since the time of Charles the Second, and that society was in as corrupt a state as the Roman republic in its last days. He assumed all the merit, and spoke with all the bitterness of a stoical Cato. He professed in his youth to imitate Alcibiades: what would the people of Athens have said if that dissolute patrician had begun to preach like Socrates, and upbraid them with their vices? In the introduction to the 'Patriot King,' Bolingbroke declares all who did not believe him a virtuous martyr, to be "a leprous race, who carry on their skins, exposed to public sight, the scales and blotches of their distemper." In the third paragraph of the same work he announces the leading principle of all his writings; and few people who have studied moral and metaphysical philosophy, and have reflected on the tendency of such a principle, can think with Mr. Disraeli that Bolingbroke's doctrines are such as ought to be impressed on the minds of the youth of England, or are likely to constitute

a glorious foundation for English Toryism. "The shortest method of arriving at real knowledge," Lord Bolingbroke here tells his readers, is "to remount to first principles, and take nobody's word about them; for it is about them that all the juggling and legerdemain employed by men whose trade it is to deceive, are set to work." Such a sentiment as this, which is the pervading sentiment in all Bolingbroke's works, political and metaphysical, is exactly what Thomas Paine echoes in his 'Age of Reason;' but what kind of Toryism is likely to be founded on this pernicious doctrine? If this be Toryism, then Voltaire was a Tory. Bolingbroke was, indeed, much more immoral than Voltaire; and it might just as soon have been expected that Voltaire should be represented as a regenerator of Toryism as Bolingbroke; for the philosopher of Ferney was much the better man of the two. Voltaire, though an unbeliever, was never a persecutor; but Bolingbroke, though an infidel, was a furious champion of the Church of England, and united in his person all the impiety of the atheist, all the fury of the bigot, and all the vices of the sensualist.

He suffered for no great cause. He was inspired with no great idea. His object, from first to last, was a mere selfish devotion to Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke. Swift's self-import-

ance was modest humility in comparison with that of his brilliant friend. To him everything was little but his own understanding. Of reverence he had no idea. He wrote upon the most solemn and the most difficult of all subjects with as much boldness and flippancy as on the mere political questions of the hour. He had a fluent declamatory style of writing, and this style is not without its excellences; but when it is applied to other topics than the measures of a ministry, and especially when it is used in discussions on the great and awful mysteries of death and of the grave, it is the most repulsive style that ever was made the vehicle of thought. Bolingbroke took great merit to himself for not being quite an atheist; but it must be confessed that no atheism is so revolting as his deism. He writes of the Almighty as he would of a familiar friend whom he would honour with his patronage. This vain, presumptuous mortal, with his innumerable vices, even patronized Providence as he patronized Pope. The name of God is unscrupulously dragged into every page of his blasphemous compositions, and used in such a manner, as to show clearly that the author had no religious sentiment in his own breast, and therefore ought never to have ventured to write on religious subjects. He should have known that he was his own god,

and that belief in himself was his only belief. He would endure no superior, either in active or speculative life, neither on earth nor in heaven. Although he admits himself that he only began to study metaphysics after he had attained his fortieth year, and although his former life had not been such as to qualify him in an eminent degree for the chair of moral philosophy; yet, finding that he was shut out from the field of mere worldly ambition, he madly plunged into those controversial depths in which this boasted human reason has neither plummet nor sounding-line. Questions which have employed the lives of philosophers in all ages, he boldly decided upon in half an hour. Had he really been well acquainted with the subjects he declaimed about, he would have known that many of the arguments he thought so original and so unanswerable, had really been brought forward over and over again by others, and over and over again triumphantly refuted. It may well be doubted whether the moral dissipation of Bolingbroke's youth, or the metaphysical dissipation of his old age, were more unworthy of a well-regulated mind, and more deservedly reprehensible. But he was at all times consistent. Just as, when a rake in his youth, he surpassed all other rakes in keeping prostitutes, running naked in the Park, and being the most

debauched young man about town, so he was in his manhood, the most factious, the most unscrupulous, and the most violent of party politicians; and in his old age, the wildest, the most reckless, and the most presumptuous of freethinkers.

Yet this is the idol that the author of this 'Vindication of the English Constitution' has set up, and that he wishes the new generation to worship! This is thy god, oh Disraeli! This is the man who, it appears, was sent expressly by Providence in the last century to organize the Tory party. The manner in which Mr. Disraeli introduces his Tory messiah to the notice of Lord Lyndhurst is certainly worthy of attention. "In the early part of the last century," he says to his illustrious correspondent, "the Tory party required a similar reorganization to that which it has lately undergone; and as it is in the nature of human affairs that the individual that is required shall not long be wanting; so, in the season of which I am treating, arose a man remarkable in an illustrious age, who, with the splendour of an organizing genius, settled the confused and discordant materials of English faction, and reduced them into clear and systematic order. Gifted with that fiery imagination, the teeming fertility of whose inventive resources is as necessary to a great statesman or

a great general as to a great poet, the ablest writer and the most accomplished orator of his age—that rare union, that in a country of free parliaments and a free press insures to its possessor the privileges of exercising a constant influence over the mind of his country—that rare union that has rendered Burke so memorable—blending with that intuitive knowledge of his race, which creative minds alone enjoy, all the wisdom which can be derived from literature and a careful experience of human affairs—no man was better qualified to be the minister of a free and powerful nation than Henry St. John; and Destiny at first appeared to combine with Nature in the elevation of his fortunes."

The greatest hero, the most high-souled statesman, could not be announced with a louder flourish of trumpets. It is a pity to deface such a picture; but the principles involved in Mr. Disraeli's 'Vindication,' and the dreadful consequences of thus holding up such an immoral man and such an unblushing infidel as Bolingbroke to the admiration of the youth of England, are too serious to be lightly passed over. It shows an utter want of all moral sensibility thus to class Bolingbroke and Burke together; to speak of Bolingbroke as one whose fortunes Nature and Destiny combined to elevate; to represent him as the

father of modern Toryism, blessed with the most reorganizing genius; and to declare that no man was better qualified than Henry St. John to be the minister of a free and aspiring country.

Why were all Bolingbroke's rare gifts of so little use to their possessor or to his country? Simply because he wanted common honesty. The English people are an honest people, and respect earnestness and sincerity. They detest treachery and infidelity, and therefore they detested Bolingbroke. No one acquainted with Bolingbroke's philosophical writings can read Mr. Disraeli's praise of his idol's "organizing genius," without a grave smile. If ever man had a disorganising genius, that man was Bolingbroke. He established nothing. He could only declaim against everything that was respectable and venerable. Had Mr. Disraeli really understood the works of Bolingbroke and Burke, he never would have written this 'Vindication,' with the first hundred pages full of declamations against abstract rights, and praises of aristocratic and ecclesiastical institutions, borrowed from Burke, and then have concluded by representing Bolingbroke as his Gamaliel of philosophic patriotism. For Burke always spoke of Bolingbroke with the utmost contempt, and characterised him as a most flimsy and superficial writer. Their principles were

directly opposed. The first of Burke's works was a treatise in ridicule of Bolingbroke, and his last great philosophical writings were all written against Bolingbroke's principles in action. "Who ever reads 'Bolingbroke?'" says Burke, in the 'Reflections;' "who ever read him through?" Bolingbroke and Burke, so far from having the least resemblance, stand in direct antagonism: they have not a principle, and scarcely an idea in common; and it is not too much to say that no man can admire them both. The philosophical student must make his choice between Bolingbroke and Burke. He who is with the one must be against the other.

The contrast between Burke and Bolingbroke may be conclusively summed up. Burke was all humility, Bolingbroke all presumption. Burke, though a sincere Protestant, was the first great champion of toleration; Bolingbroke, though an avowed infidel, and the author of many treatises against the Bible, was in his day of power, a persecutor of the dissenters from the Church, in which he believed less than any of those whom he oppressed. Burke based all his speculations on the broad grounds of morality and religion; Bolingbroke was ever undermining every moral and religious foundation. Burke, after a most studious youth and manhood, entered public life

with a profound sense of all his responsibilities, and with all his principles firmly settled; Bolingbroke, after a most licentious youth, rushed into politics, and acted in such a reckless manner as clearly proved him to have had no principle whatever. Burke, though an avowed party politician, wrote with the wisdom of a retired philosopher, and his observations on all the stirring events of his time, are conceived in the spirit of a profound historian; Bolingbroke, though professing to be a retired philosopher and to have done with active life, writes with the indiscriminating fury of the most unprincipled partisan, and his diatribes can now only be read with wonder and pity, as the productions of a mind crazed by jealousy and vindictiveness. Burke, while declaring that politicians were not so corrupt as was vulgarly supposed, spent his brief official life in reducing the means of corruption; Bolingbroke, while in his writings ever declaiming against the corruptions of his time, was, when in power, the most corrupt of public men. Burke, though struggling for many years in the cause of those who were separated from him by race, country, and religion, ever maintained that the love of the patriot for his native land was a wise and endearing passion; Bolingbroke, though he wrote volumes on patriotism, always declared that na-

tionality and patriotism, were ridiculous prejudices, and that to the wise man all lands were the same. Burke was always reverent, respecting authority, and trusting to the experience of ages; Bolingbroke was destitute of reverence, despised all authority, and sneered at the experience of two thousand years. Burke's eloquence, great as it is, is surpassed by his wisdom, and his works can never be thoroughly appreciated unless his eloquence is considered as secondary to his principles; Bolingbroke was a brilliant declaimer, and, a brilliant declaimer only, and this caused his style to be enthusiastically admired by his contemporaries, though his writings are despised by posterity. Burke, though he wrote on the passing topics of his age, treated them so as to make them a fund of instruction for all time, and his works can be profitably studied for information on every great political question now before the world; Bolingbroke's compositions have little to interest the politician of the present time, they are as impracticable as though they had been written in a monkish cloister, and are now scarcely ever read. Burke looked at the bright side of human nature, neither acting wrongly himself, nor being ready to suspect others of acting wrongly; and declaring, that from his great experience, he had found much

real virtue among mankind; Bolingbroke, in his life, violated every principle of morality, and outraged common decency, yet was ever ready to declaim against the bad deeds of other people, never imputed a good motive for any action when he could find a bad one, and even in his will could not but break out in peevish wailings against his enemies, friends, and servants. Yet these are the two men whom Mr. Disraeli associates together, and it is quite evident, that he admires Bolingbroke's brilliant vices much more than Burke's steady virtues.

Thus this 'Vindication of the English Constitution' is plainly erroneous, even in its historical facts, and most objectionable in its leading principle. But what will the Tories of the present day think, when they are told that they are "the democratic party?" This Mr. Disraeli declares at all times. Having said so much on the leading dogma of the book, the assertion that nine-tenths of the people in the time of George the Second were Tories, and that the Tories were then, and always have been, the democratic party, may fairly be left to the consideration of every reader, whether Whig or Tory. The Tory democracy, the declaration that Mr. Pitt was a democratic minister, and his system a democratic system, may safely be left

to be refuted by the present Lord Derby, who, in accepting office two years ago, announced that the peculiar mission of the government in which Mr. Disraeli held such an important situation, was to combat democracy. The eloquence, too, with which Mr. Disraeli speaks of the last great war as "the immortal struggle between Toryism and Napoleon," would perhaps be more impressive, had not the author, only two years before, written 'The Revolutionary Epic,' and made Napoleon the hero of the poem, as Homer made Achilles the hero of the 'Iliad.'

The 'Vindication' concludes, as it might be expected to do, with a panegyric on the English constitution. This blessed constitution, we are told with remarkable novelty, has established civil equality, united freedom with glory, combined the durability of Rome with the adventure of Carthage, secured to us commerce, agriculture, ingenious manufactures, victorious armies, invincible fleets; given us intellectual might, manly hearts, national energy; bequeathed to us the authors of England; and an administration of justice in Utopian purity; struggled successfully with the papacy, combined sectarian toleration with national orthodoxy, made private ambition conduce to public welfare, baffled the machinations of parties, survived the moral

earthquake, and outlived the mental hurricane. But the crowning blessing of this English constitution, while securing to every man his suitable career and a suitable reward, is, as the author calls upon us to believe, that it has summoned Lord Lyndhurst to preside in courts and parliaments, and given to Mr. Disraeli himself a right, the enjoyment of which he would not exchange for the ermined stole, the starry breast, or the coroneted brow, "the right of expressing my free thoughts to a free people."

And now, as is too frequently the case throughout Mr. Disraeli's career, his admirers must expect to see a change of performance; from political philosophy they must turn to virulent personalities, and from high tragedy descend to low farce. The 'Vindication of the English Constitution' was published in the December of 1835. On the Christmas-Day of that year an article ridiculing Mr. Disraeli's Tory-democratic theory, reproaching him with endeavouring to become one of O'Connell's tail, and insinuating that Lord Lyndhurst did not approve of the philosophy nor the party tactics of his eloquent correspondent, appeared in the 'Globe' newspaper. Mr. Disraeli sent a letter the next day to the editor of this evening journal, denying that he had ever courted O'Connell, or that he was

treated with undisguised contempt by the member for Dublin, whom he had only met once in society, and by whom he was then received with becoming courtesy. The editor of the 'Globe' was therefore inaccurate in his facts. He was equally inaccurate in his opinions. Mr. Disraeli might be permitted to say that his opinions had never changed. "My letter to Lord Lyndhurst," he continued, "just published, to which you allude, contains the opinions which I adopted when the party I opposed appeared likely to enjoy power for half a century, opinions which I hope half a century hence I may still profess." The editor cordially echoed Mr. Disraeli's hope that he might be alive fifty years hence to profess opinions of any kind; and, added, "may we be there to see;" the compliments of the season, and many happy returns of it, would then be rather fully realised; he also trusted that Mr. Disraeli's confidence in his longevity would be better founded than, judging from the past, was his reliance on his future consistency; and, the editor added, it was evident, from the prospect of long life that Mr. Disraeli had before him, he must not only be the "younger," but the "youngest" of the Disraelis.

Indignant at this amusing commentary on his letter, Mr. Disraeli immediately addressed a communication to the 'Times,' stating that the editor of the 'Globe' had suppressed an important paragraph, and "when accused of falsehood and convicted of forgery, took refuge in silly nonsense." Whenever Mr. Disraeli was at war with other daily papers, he always took care to be on very good terms with the 'Times,' and his compliments to the editor of that powerful sheet always kept pace with his furious invectives against the contemporary editor. On this occasion the 'Times' was complimented, and the 'Globe' abused, in the following terms: "An anonymous writer should at least display power. When Jupiter hurls a thunderbolt, it may be mercy in the god to veil his glory with a cloud; but we can only view with feelings of contemptuous lenity the mischievous varlet who pelts us with mud as we are riding by, and then hides behind a dust-hole." Mr. Disraeli then hazards some personal allusions to a certain member of the House of Commons, whom he supposed to have been the author of the criticism on the 'Vindication.' The editor of the 'Globe' replied to Mr. Disrael's personality by declaring that no member of parlia-

ment who ever contributed to that newspaper withheld himself from being personally responsible for the productions of his pen.

To most people it would have seemed time to end a newspaper dispute, that had arisen from two or three observations on a political pamphlet, which the author, of course, must have expected to be criticised, and with which he certainly could not have imagined that the Whig organs of the press would agree. But not so thought Mr. Disraeli. He was always determined to have the last word, and always ready to return in full measure any abuse he might receive. Once before the public, he was resolved not to be forgotten again very soon; and besides, this contention, if it did no other good, certainly helped to sell the 'Vindication.' He addressed, in reply to the last few observations of the 'Globe,' a long letter of some two columns to his indulgent friend, the 'Times.' It was an elaborate defence of his political career.

In this mighty epistle, the editor of the 'Globe' is called a "thing," — "a concoctor of rheumy rhetoric,"—"a poor devil, paid for his libel by the line." Quoting from 'Macbeth,' and Mr. Disraeli is really never happy in his Shakspearian allusions, he adds, "I will not say with 'Macbeth,' that I

shall be vanquished by none of woman born,' but this I will declare, that the Whig Samson will never silence me by the jaw of an ass." Then, patting the editor of the 'Times' gently on the back, Mr. Disraeli says, "The editor of the 'Globe' talks of *our* united thunder; I cannot compliment him and all his members of parliament on a single flash of lightning." All this occurs in the first paragraph.

He then notices the charges that the "dull bully," the editor of the 'Globe,' had made. Mr. Disraeli had longed for an opportunity, which was fortunately now afforded him, of vindicating his consistency. Forgetting that he had discussed the subject in his letter to O'Connell only a few short months before, he enters into a long detail of the different circumstances in which he advocated different measures, but was always, in his own opinion, perfectly consistent. He was abroad when the Reform Bill was first introduced, and did not return to England until the spring of 1832, when the great measure was virtually carried.* The nation was in terror of a rampant democracy. He only

* It may be observed, that Mr. Disraeli here says that he only returned to England in 1832, while a few months before, in his letter to O'Connell, he speaks of himself as endeavouring to restore the balance of parties in 1831.

saw an impending oligarchy. The Tories were in a state of ignorant stupefaction, trembling at the anticipation of anarchy, when what they had really to fear was a new reign of terror, under the sovereignty of a Council of Ten. Even the Duke of Wellington, who had conquered in the Peninsula, was here defeated, and declared that the king's government could not be carried on.

Mr. Disraeli saw how the government could be carried on. He therefore, through the medium of a friend, applied to O'Connell and Hume, and requested their assistance, as he was going to stand for High Wycombe. He contested the borough in local influence, for his family resided in the neighbourhood. Mr. O'Connell was not, in 1832, such a daring traitor as he afterwards became. He was then a friend to the established church, and his lips overflowed with patriotism. Had Mr. Disraeli been returned to parliament in 1832, he would have felt it his duty to support O'Connell and Hume; for he saw in their connexion the brooding elements of an active opposition, the seeds of a combination that might have been the salvation of the country. It had been said that he stood upon Radical principles; the Whigs, however, opposed him as a Tory. True, he avowed himself an advocate of triennial

parliaments, just as Sir William Wyndham did, as the leader of the Tories in the last century against Walpole. True, he was in favour of the ballot, in 1832, just as Sir William Wyndham would have been had he lived in this century.

Finding it convenient to say nothing of his Marylebone Radicalism of 1833, Mr. Disraeli then comes to his contest at Taunton in 1835. He felt it his duty, instead of continuing "an isolated member of the political world," to become an earnest partisan. The Tory party, under the guidance of an able leader, had then revived, and professed the principles of Sir William Wyndham, and of Lord Bolingbroke, "in whose writings," said Mr. Disraeli, "I have ever recognised the most pure and the profoundest sources of political and constitutional wisdom."

He returns at length to his ostensible enemy, the editor of the 'Globe,' and declares him to be "one of that not inconsiderable class of individuals, ignorant of every species and section of human knowledge." And then in a not very skilful plagiarism from Dr. Johnson, who said to Boswell, "I have found you a reason, sir, I am not bound to find you an understanding." Mr. Disraeli declares, "I am bound to furnish my antagonists with arguments, but not with com-

prehensions." The editor of the 'Globe' is said to be as ignorant of the history of his own country as of the pre-Adamite Sultans, and to be a poor devil, only fit for his vocation of chalking the walls of the nation with praises of his master's blacking.

Then working himself up into a rage against the Whigs, whom he supposes to have inspired the editor of the 'Globe' with the first idea of attacking the 'Vindication,' and to have been the means of keeping such a doughty antagonist as the correspondent of Lord Lyndhurst out of parliament, Mr. Disraeli concludes with this fervid peroration. "I am not surprised, and assuredly not terrified by the hostility of the Whigs. They may keep me out of parliament, but they cannot deprive me of the means of influencing public opinion as long as there is in this country a free press—a blessing which, had they succeeded in Louis-Philippising the country as they intended, would not, however, have long afforded us its salutary protection. I feel that I have darted at least one harpoon in the floundering sides of this Leviathan. All his roaring, and all his bellowing, his foaming mouth, and his lashing tail, will not daunt me. I know it is the roar of agony, and the bellow of certain annihilation; the foam of frenzy, and the contortions of despair.

I dared to encounter the monster when he was undoubted monarch of the waters, and it would indeed be weakness to shrink from a collision with him now, in this merited moment of his awful and impending dissolution."

Two days elapsed before the 'Globe' noticed this elaborate epistle. The letter was then republished at full length, by way of penance, said the editor, for having noticed Mr. Disraeli at all, and lest so ready an assailant should again accuse the Whig newspaper of suppressing such annihilating blows. The editor would not, however, gratify Mr. Disraeli's appetite for notoriety any further, except by taking an early opportunity of detailing the deceptions that he had practised on members of the liberal party, when he sought by their aid to get into parliament as a Radical.

Some days afterwards, the 'Globe' redeemed its promise. The charge of Radicalism, in 1832, and of advocating every Radical measure, was then re-asserted, part of Mr. Disraeli's address at High Wycombe, full of Radical expressions, was quoted, a letter was given from Mr. Bulwer, in which it was stated that no person could doubt that Mr. Disraeli was a sincere reformer, since he was the advocate of the ballot, triennial parliaments, and cheap go-

vernment, the pole-star of all true reformers, and the reverse of Tory principles; the editor also declared that Mr. Hume really did address his letter of recommendation, not to a third party, but to Mr. Disraeli himself, who had even called upon Mr. Hume on this occasion, at his house in Bryanstone Square;" and that the statement was made on the authority of a third person who was present at the time, and Mr. Disraeli was defied to contradict it, by appealing, if he pleased, to Mr. Hume.

Mr. Disraeli again had recourse to the columns of the 'Times,' and declared that Mr. Hume's letter was really addressed to a third party, and that he had hitherto courteously avoided introducing that gentleman's name into the discussion. He denied ever having been at Mr. Hume's house. He had seen Mr. Hume only once in his life, and that was at the House of Commons. But the allusion to his appetite for notoriety appears to have stung him more than the accusation of falsehood; for he notices it in these polite terms:—"The editor of the 'Globe' must have a more contracted mind, and a paltrier spirit than even I imagined, if he can suppose for a moment that an ignoble controversy with an obscure animal like himself, can gratify the passion for notoriety of one whose works at least

have been translated into the languages of civilised Europe, and circulated by thousands in the New World. It is not then my passion for notoriety that has induced me to tweak the editor of the 'Globe' by the nose, and inflict sundry kicks on the baser part of his base body—to make him eat dirt, and his own words—fouler than any filth; but because I wished to show to the world what a miserable poltroon, what a craven dullard, what a literary scarecrow, what a mere thing stuffed with straw, is this soi-disant director of public opinion, and official organ of Whig politics."

The 'Globe,' in reply, said that it had made direct and specific charges against Mr. Disraeli; and that such charges could not be got rid of by mere vapouring and insolence. The editor had dared Mr. Disraeli to appeal to Mr. Hume, in order to vindicate himself from the charge of falsehood, and Mr. Disraeli had declined doing so, because, as he said, he did not wish to bring Mr. Hume's name into the controversy. Was that a course, the editor demanded, for a man to take who had been accused of falsehood? The 'Globe' then appealed to Mr. Hume to come forward and say whether Mr. Disraeli had not called upon him at his house in Bryanstone Square, and personally requested his recommen-

dation to the electors of Wycombe; whether Mr. Disraeli had not given him to understand that he was a Radical; and whether the expressions that had been quoted were not in Mr. Hume's first letter to Mr. Disraeli.

Mr. Hume answered the appeal. His impression certainly was, that Mr. Disraeli called upon him before going down to High Wycombe, and was recommended to him by Mr. Bulwer, who stated that Mr. Disraeli was a warm supporter and a zealous advocate of Mr. Hume's general political principles. "I expressed," continued Mr. Hume, "in my letter to Mr. Disraeli, a hope that all the reformers would rally round him as the man who entertained liberal opinions on every branch of government, and was prepared to support reform and economy in every department. Mr. Disraeli on the receipt of that letter expressed himself thus: 'It will be my endeavour that you shall not repent the confidence which you have reposed in me.' I believed him to be a Radical reformer, and certainly placed confidence in him as such." Mr. Hume also declared that he never wrote to any third person in Mr. Disraeli's favour. In corroboration of Mr. Hume's statement there was also given a letter from his private secretary, Mr. Walter Scott, distinctly affirming that Mr. Disraeli was at Mr. Hume's house in 1832; a

copy of the identical letter which Mr. Hume had sent to Mr. Disraeli himself, and Mr. Disraeli's own note in reply were also published.

This evidence was convincing and unquestionable. Considering how violent had been Mr. Disraeli's Toryism, during the year that had just terminated, to declare so boldly and so frequently that he valued himself expressly for his consistency, showed considerable reliance on Mr. Hume's forbearance. Nor had that confidence been misplaced. Even in the violent quarrel with O'Connell, Mr. Hume had never taken any part against Mr. Disraeli, nor even after the deliberate assertion in the 'Times,' that Mr. Hume's recommendation was really given, not to himself, but to a third party. Mr. Hume had therefore certainly not been Mr. Disraeli's enemy. He had only come forward at the last moment to answer a direct personal appeal, nor was there anything in his letter at all acrimonious. It was only a simple statement of what he believed to be the facts of a case which Mr. Disraeli had himself brought forward. It might therefore have at least been expected that Mr. Hume would have been treated with courtesy. But enraged by the production of such undeniable evidence, Mr. Disraeli wrote a very abusive letter to Mr. Hume, and sent it to the 'Times,' through whose friendly

medium it was immediately published. Mr. Disraeli still declared that he had only met Mr. Hume once, and that meeting was at the House of Commons, whither he had gone for the purpose of seeking an explanation of conduct which had violated all the courtesies of common life. "It is obvious," said Mr. Disraeli to Mr. Hume, "that from the cautious mendacity of the commencement of your letter you were aware that you were countenancing a lie;" and the letter ended with some taunts about the apostle of economy and reform, "closing a career commenced and matured in corruption, by spouting sedition in Middlesex, and counselling rebellion in Canada." Two days afterwards, Mr. Disraeli sent another letter to the 'Times,' enclosing one from Mr. Bulwer, addressed to himself in 1832, and italicising the words, "I have received from my friend Mr. Hume, a letter addressed to you, which I have forwarded to Bradenham." Mr. Disraeli now admitted that he had been mistaken in stating as he did so confidently, that Mr. Hume's letter had not been addressed to himself, which indeed it was then impossible to continue asserting, when the letter he was then publishing from Mr. Bulwer contained undeniable evidence to the contrary.

Thus this perpetual see-saw between the

'Globe' newspaper and Mr. Disraeli was kept up from the 25th of December, 1835, to the 14th of January, 1836. And after all the controversy was really about nothing. It was entirely provoked by Mr. Disraeli, who seemed determined at all hazards to find amusement for the people at that Christmas period. Nothing however can excuse the extreme virulence, and even ungentlemanly language of his letters. How they ever could be penned by a literary man who had the least regard for his reputation, is really wonderful. It is scarcely less surprising that such a newspaper as the 'Times,' should have inserted such extremely abusive communications, full of the most vulgar vituperation, and scarcely redeemed by a single ray of wit. The improvement in the tone of the newspaper press has kept pace with the improvement in the tone of general society during the last eighteen years. Most certainly no daily newspaper would now insert such letters as Mr. Disraeli wrote at this period of his career.

He was however all but desperate. Years were passing away, and he was still shut out from the House of Commons. He appears to have worked himself into a frantic rage against the Whigs, and like other people when they are in a questionable state of mind, seriously believed that he was suf-

fering under persecution. In the last letter he wrote on his controversy with the 'Globe,' he re-asserted that the Whig Ministers had inspired the editor with the intention of attacking one whom they dreaded so much on account of his uncompromising eloquence. As if it were not natural that the 'Globe' should have reviewed Mr. Disraeli's work without any prompting from behind the scenes; and as if the ministers of this great empire had nothing else to do but to watch the motions of an individual, who had not even been a member of the House of Commons, and had certainly at that time given no indications of extraordinary political ability. Such salutary considerations never crossed Mr. Disraeli's mind. He was certain that he had long been a marked man, and that all the influence of the Whig ministers was unsparingly exerted on every occasion against their resolute opponent of such remarkable literary and philosophical endowments. But in the language of the peroration of his constitutional treatise, his enemies could not deprive him of the power of influencing public opinion, and of giving his free thoughts to a free people. This conviction, acting upon his nature, soon made him appear in a new character.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was little honour to be gained in the furious altercations Mr. Disraeli had lately been engaged in, and few people would have continued them longer than was absolutely necessary. It would by most men have been regarded as a very tiresome task, thus to write bitterly personal epistles in reply to articles in a daily newspaper, and to continue this questionable warfare for three whole weeks, with the worst epithets freely used on both sides, but especially on the side of him whose name was appended to his letters, and who was therefore well known to everybody. This was playing a losing game on Mr. Disraeli's part, and might have been expected to disgust him with these fierce newspaper contentions. Far different was the effect on his mind. He immediately embarked on another stormy sea

of political controversy, and in a manner that was certain to raise up against him many enemies. Four days after he had written the last letter to the 'Globe,' the first of another series of most violent letters was written, and the following day appeared in the 'Times.' Mr. Disraeli was now determined to be the Junius of his age, and under the corresponding title of 'Runnymede,' resolved to assail the administration of Lord Melbourne with the same success, and the same violent hostility carried to the utmost limits of licentious personality, with which his great prototype had assailed the administration of the Duke of Grafton.

The career of the great anonymous political satirist of the eighteenth century, however objectionable to every man of high principles and rigid morality, had something in it exquisitely captivating to the mind of the author of 'Vivian Grey,' and admirer of Lord Bolingbroke. But Mr. Disraeli greatly mistook his own powers when he supposed that he could be another Junius, and have the same influence on the minds of the English people. Had he paid as much attention to their spirit as to their style, he might have discovered much from a careful study of these celebrated letters. Though vehement and personal in the highest degree, Junius was never

entirely personal, nor were personalities the staple of his communications. Nothing can be more reprehensible than the letter to the Duke of Bedford; nothing can be more shameful than his malevolence against humble individuals whose names are now only remembered by his hostility. Yet there is much truth in Junius. He had on many occasions law and justice on his side, and many of his principles were eminently manly and English. George the Third and his courtiers might have learnt from their mighty enemy that the days of favouritism were gone for ever, and that the time had come when rulers could no longer set public opinion at defiance. Junius was the precursor of the journalism of this century, and he taught in language which could not be forgotten, the great truth that all government not only originated from the people, but must be administered according to the sense of the people. He taught that there was no longer an insuperable barrier between the governors and the governed; that the people were not mere blind machines, but living and thinking beings. Though he was personally virulent in the extreme against the ministers and the servile tools of the King, he did not forget to argue, on solid constitutional principles, against the decision of the House of Commons,

in their own cause, and the election of Colonel Luttrell.

Now Mr. Disraeli in these letters of 'Runnymede' has nothing but personalities throughout the series. He does not appear to be aware of the existence of such a thing as principle in the moral world; nor were there any great evils, or much public excitement at all to justify or even excuse the abuse he anonymously poured on the Whig ministers, individually and collectively. Besides, public men in our times are not what they were when Junius denounced them; nor are the people so ill informed, nor so little in communication with their representatives. Government is now no mystery. The demagogue cannot rise to power by paltry arts; the personal satirist cannot defame by paltry misrepresentations.

There is no chance of Mr. Disraeli's acknowledging these productions; but there is no doubt whatever of their being his compositions. It cannot be said that they are very eloquent or very judicious epistles; perhaps, never did man show less sagacity in judging of the characters of public men, than this 'Runnymede;' no style of writing can be more opposed to genuine earnest English eloquence than that in which these letters are composed. Rhetoric, during the most degenerate days of the Roman empire, or since the

decline of Italian literature, never assumed a more tawdry garb. To give any idea of them to those who have not read them would be impossible without some quotations, for no words can represent them as they deserve. Being fully aware of what Mr. Disraeli's opinion of Sir Robert Peel was in 1846, when the then prime minister was treated in such a manner as was unexampled in our parliamentary history, it is with singular feeling that this address to Sir Robert in 1836 must be perused. The session of parliament for that year was just about to commence, and in this fulsome language is Sir Robert Peel saluted on the occasion by Mr. Disraeli, in the fifth of 'Runnymede's' valuable contributions to political eloquence:

"*To Sir Robert Peel.*

"Before you receive this letter, you will in all probability have quitted the halls and bowers of Drayton; those gardens and that library where you have realized the romance of Verulam, and where you enjoy "the lettered leisure" that Temple loved. Your present progress to the metropolis may not be as picturesque as that which you experienced twelve months back, when the confidence of your sovereign, and the hopes of your country summoned you from the galleries

of the Vatican and the city of the Cæsars. It may not be as picturesque, but it is not less proud—it will be more triumphant. You are summoned now like the Knight of Rhodes, in 'Schiller's heroic ballad,' as the only hope of a suffering island. The mighty dragon is again abroad, depopulating our fields, wasting our pleasant places, poisoning our fountains, menacing our civilization. To-day he gorges on Liverpool—to-morrow he riots at Birmingham: as he advances near the metropolis terror and disgust proportionately increase. Already we hear his bellow more awful than a hyena's: already our atmosphere is tainted with the venomous expirations of his malignant lungs; yet a little while and his incendiary crest will flame on our horizon, and we shall mark the horrors of his insatiable jaw, and the scaly volume of his atrocious tail!

"In your chivalry alone is our hope. Clad in the panoply of your splendid talents, and your spotless character, we feel assured that you will subdue this unnatural and unnational monster, and that we may yet see sedition, and treason, and rapine, rampant as they may have late figured, quail before your power and prowess.

"You are about to renew the combat under the most favourable auspices. When, a year ago,

you, with that devotion to your country which is your great characteristic, scorning all those refined delights of fortune which are your inheritance, and which no one is more capable of appreciating, and resigning all those pure charms of domestic life to which no one is naturally more attached, you threw yourself in the breach of the battered and beleagured citadel of the Constitution, you undertook the heroic enterprise with every disadvantage," &c., &c.

And thus this panegyric continues, in a strain such as no manly Englishman, one would have thought, could address to another. It may be permitted in a political writer to approve, and enthusiastically advocate the principles that any public man may possess; but why talk in the style of a fashionable chronicle of "the halls and bowers of Drayton where you have realized the romance of Verulam,"—"those refined delights of fortune which are your inheritance, and which no one is more capable of appreciating"—and "those pure charms of domestic life to which no one is naturally more attached?" Can anything be more opposed to good taste? And what, after all, was this mighty dragon, with a bellow more awful than a hyena's, with the venomous expirations of its malignant lungs, the incendiary crest

"flaming on the horizon, the horrors of his insatiable jaw, and the scaly volume of his atrocious tail? Is this eloquence? Is this fine writing? It is the very corruption of rhetoric, most unnatural and extravagant. Tinsel and bombast could not be more fully displayed. Compare this panegyric of Sir Robert in 1836 with the invectives against him from the same source ten years later. Is there to be no medium either in praise or blame? Must politicians always be covering each other with most fulsome caresses, or malignantly directing daggers at each other's hearts?

The abuse of the Whigs in these letters is carried just as much beyond the bounds of legitimate censure, as the admiration of Sir Robert Peel is beyond the bounds of fair panegyric. A good satirist will not find it necessary to chalk "scoundrel" and "fool" on the backs of his political opponents. But 'Runnymede' does nothing else but call names. His pictures of the Whig ministers are hideous caricatures. He commences his letter to Lord John Russell by declaring that he had long and intimate opportunities of observing him, and was able to give a just analysis of his character. "Born with a strong ambition but a feeble intellect"—"with the talent of political mischief remarkably developed"—"busied with the tattle of valets and waiting-

maids"—"a feeble Catiline pacing the avenues of Holland House"—"a miniature Mokanna exhaling upon the constitution of your country all the long hoarded venom, and those distempers that have for years accumulated in your petty heart, and tainted the current of your mortified existence"—"a propensity to degrade everything to your own mean level, and to measure everything by your malignant standard:" these are certainly strange phrases for any writer to use against such an honourable and straightforward man as Lord John Russell, even though the then Home Secretary might be of different politics to his anonymous abuser. But perhaps the most surprising of the taunts against Lord John is that about his poetry. Forgetting that another gentleman besides Lord John Russell had mistaken the romance of travel for the inspiration of poetry, and had believed himself a poet, Mr. Disraeli, under the assumed name of 'Runnymede,' said to Lord John: "When you returned from Spain, the solitary life of travel, and the inspiration of a romantic country, acting upon your ambition, had persuaded you that you were a great poet; your intellect, in consequence, produced the feeblest tragedy in our language." Did Lord John Russell ever believe himself a poet more than Mr. Disraeli believed himself a Milton? Is the

tragedy of 'Don Carlos' feebler and more pretentious than 'The Revolutionary Epic?'

Lord Palmerston gets no better reception than his colleague from this profound judge of human character. The Foreign Secretary of the Melbourne administration, has every contemptuous epithet lavished upon him by Mr. Disraeli, as 'Runnymede.' The eleventh of these letters is addressed to Lord Palmerston, who is informed that he is "a minister maintaining himself in power in spite of the contempt of the whole nation," — "the great Apollo of aspiring understrappers," — blessed with a "dexterity which seems a happy compound of the smartness of an attorney's clerk, and the intrigues of a Greek of the Lower Empire,"—shows "a want of breeding," — "reminds one of a favourite footman on easy terms with his mistress,"—a "Tory underling whose audacity in accepting the seals of the Foreign Office is only equalled by the imbecility of the Whigs in offering them to such a man,"—"your Lordship's career is as insignificant as your intellect,"—"your crimping Lordship," —hopes that "one silly head will be added to the heap of destruction it has caused." The epistle to Lord Palmerston ends with an apostrophe to England: "Oh, my country! fortunate, thrice-fortunate England! with your destinies at

such a moment entrusted to the Lord Fanny of diplomacy! Methinks I can see your Lordship, the Sporus of politics, cajoling France with an airy compliment, and menacing Russia with a perfumed cane!"

In another letter of the series, Lord Palmerston is mentioned as one who, "after being first sent to solitude and spare diet, and some salutary treatises on the English constitution, may, after a considerable interval, be capacitated for re-entering public life, and even filling with an approximation to obscure respectability, some of the lowlier offices of the State." Of course, the first salutary treatise on the English constitution which 'Runnymede' was prepared to recommend for Lord Palmerston's perusal, in the hope that his Lordship might, in time, fill with an approximation to obscure respectability, some of the lowlier offices of the State, must have been a certain recently published 'Vindication of the English Constitution, by Disraeli the Younger.'

The merits of no statesman have been more tardily acknowledged than those of Lord Palmerston. During all the Melbourne administration, the treatment he received is now truly astonishing. Every nickname that could laugh him into contempt was given him, and all the arts of malice were used to make him odious. But it was scarcely

to be expected that a man with such pretensions as Mr. Disraeli has ever set forth, should have gone farther in his attacks on this able minister than the lowest newspaper contributor. Mr. Disraeli, too, is unquestionably a consummate master of satire. How is it, then, that in these letters of 'Runnymede' he is found echoing the meanest abuse of the most vehement partisan; and even exceeding anything that was ever written by an ordinary politician? He had not even the pretence of direct political hostility. He was not a member of the House of Commons. He had no leading part to play in the politics of the hour. Yet, under the mask of 'Runnymede,' he is seen assailing, with the most vindictive personality, the ministers all round. Even the most unquestionable merit, and the purest patriotism, appear to have afforded no shield to his anonymous malignity.

Who will now deny that Lord William Bentinck was one of the noblest rulers of our Indian empire? Will Mr. Disraeli himself venture to assert that Lord George Bentinck was a nobler character than his uncle Lord William? Mr. Disraeli has, since 1836, become closely allied with the Bentincks. He has attempted to canonize Lord George in a work dedicated to Lord Henry. But what were Lord George or Lord Henry to

Lord William? And how was he received by 'Runnymede?' Lord William had just returned from India, his head adorned with the noblest of wreaths, when, on offering himself as a candidate for the representation of Glasgow, he was singled out for invective by Mr. Disraeli, who addressed him in these terms in the tenth of 'Runnymede's' letters. The epistle commences: "I have just read your Lordship's address to the electors of Glasgow, and when I remember that the author of this production has been intrusted for no inconsiderable period with the government of one hundred million of human beings, I tremble." Lord William is told that his address implies "a want of honesty, and a want of sense," that it shows he is "ignorant, audacious, and reckless," is an indication "of *your weak and perplexed mind, and your base and grovelling spirit;*" and again, for there is tautology in this abuse, that the "address is admirably characteristic of a perplexed intellect and a profligate ambition." Lord William Bentinck is then informed that he is "unprincipled from the weakness of his head," and that he is "a bustling man without talents." But perhaps the worst of all these inexcusable scurrilities is the allusion to the ill health of the late ruler of India. Lord William had apologized to the electors of Glasgow for being

prevented by indisposition from personally soliciting their suffrages; he is therefore declared by 'Runnymede' to be "one of those mere lees of debilitated humanity and exhausted nature which the winds periodically waft to the hopeless breezes of their native cliffs," and more offensively still, "an antiquated governor," "a drivelling nabob."

The Whig ministers are represented as "the most contemptible and the most odious of created beings." Their furious antagonist exclaims indignantly, "the gods of Egypt are the ministers of England!" And then, in a choice piece of abuse, there are pictured "the ox-like form of the Lansdowne Apis," "an altar raised to an ape," "incense burned before a cat-like colleague," Palmerston and Grant, "two sleek and long-tailed rats," O'Connell "towering like a crocodile above them all," and Lord John Russell "an infinitely small scarabæus," "an insect."

The letters of 'Runnymede' were collected together, and published in the August of 1836, in a volume, with a dedication to Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Disraeli appended to them a treatise on 'The Spirit of Whiggism,' in six chapters; but he only repeats in that production all he had said a few months before in the 'Vindication of the English Constitution.' His old accusations of

the Whigs for the Peerage Bill and the Septennial Act are again brought forward; and indeed it is one of Mr. Disraeli's habits to repeat frequently in different publications any of his ideas which he thinks peculiarly excellent and profound. The reader of the letters of 'Runnymede' is informed by their gifted author, that "The Whigs in 1718 sought to govern the country by swamping the House of Lords; in 1836 it is the House of Commons that is to be swamped." And it is then triumphantly asked, "Where Argyle and Walpole failed, is it probable that Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell will succeed?" Now this is directly asserting that Argyle and Walpole sought in 1718 to swamp the House of Commons by the Peerage Bill, while the slightest knowledge of history would have shown Mr. Disraeli that it was Walpole by whom the Peerage Bill was defeated. Walpole was not in the ministry that brought in the Peerage Bill, either in 1718 or in 1719. Mr. Disraeli's knowledge of the measure on which he founds all his accusations of the Whigs, was evidently inaccurate in the extreme; and this ignorance is inexcusable in a man who brings forward such very serious charges against his political opponents, and is so ready to taunt others with ignorance. It cannot

be said that Mr. Disraeli successfully imitated Junius in these political letters: their author was evidently hurried beyond the bounds of legitimate criticism and good taste, by writing under a fictitious name. What Ben Jonson, in one sense, said of Shakspeare, is as true of Mr. Disraeli in another—*Sufflaminandus erat*; his satire requires restraint in order to be at all effective. At this time he had not learnt how to curb his fiery steed, and instead of obeying the rein, it dashed furiously with him through brakes and briars. Nothing can be more morally objectionable than such satirical exhibitions. Spain has had romantic robbers, and Italy some very elegant bravoes; and 'Runnymede' resembles such foreigners much more than a true-born Englishman. Mr. Disraeli spoke of the Whig party as an "unnatural and unnational monster." He could not see how unnatural and unnational was the eloquence of these letters, and other compositions of the same kind. 'Runnymede' resembles in his style of writing, much more than Lord Palmerston ever did, "a Greek of the Lower Empire."

Mr. Disraeli's next publication was, however, more innocent. It is not surprising, that after so many months of the most determined pugnacity and outrageous personality, he for a while turned

his sword into a ploughshare, the iron pen of the malignant satirist into the soft quill of the fashionable novelist.

'Henrietta Temple, a Love Story,' was published in the November of 1836. Of all Mr. Disraeli's fictions, it deserves to be characterized as the most perfect. It is exactly what it professes to be, a love story, as love is considered in fashionable novels. 'Henrietta Temple,' what a delightful name for a heroine! 'Henrietta Temple, a Love Story:' what exquisite judgment and knowledge of the mysteries of novel-making were shown in selecting the title-page! With what eager anticipation must that title have been perused by all the romantic devotees of the circulating libraries! How frequently it must have been inquired after! With what breathless interest it must have been read! Nor would it disappoint any of those young ladies whose reading is confined to that class of works. Those who are familiar with the daring eccentricities of most of Mr. Disraeli's compositions will read 'Henrietta Temple' with astonishment, for the work has none of the author's remarkable individuality; but is an excellent novel, according to the standard of the Minerva press.

Mr. Disraeli has written works expressly psy-

chological. This work deserves the attention of all psychologists who wish to observe how the author of 'Vivian Grey' and 'Alroy' can metamorphose himself into the genuine scribe of a novel manufactory.

It is memorable as being, perhaps, the only one of Mr. Disraeli's efforts in which he can be said to have thoroughly succeeded, and to have accomplished all he promised. "The eye," Mr. Carlyle is continually telling us, and his imitators are continually repeating, "only brings with it what it has the power of seeing." Thus the estimate of 'Henrietta Temple' will very much depend on the critic's own capabilities. If 'Henrietta Temple' is simply regarded as the production of a good literary workman, the book must be allowed to be executed in a thorough workmanlike manner, creditable both to the employers and the employed. If it is regarded as the composition of one ambitious of being thought a great creative mind and a great statesman, it is impossible to speak more contemptuously of it than it deserves. The love scenes are those of a hack novelist, and not those of a creative artist; and the conventional decorums are in the true style of the fashionable novel.

Ferdinand Armine, the heir of a decayed Ro-

man Catholic family, is betrothed to a very good young lady, who is an immense heiress, and his family rely upon the marriage as the means of restoring their house to its ancient splendour. He goes down to the family seat a short time before the ceremony is to take place, and falls desperately in love with Henrietta Temple, the accomplished and beautiful daughter of a respectable diplomatist. After Ferdinand has laid his heart at the feet of Henrietta, and gone to Bath for the ostensible purpose of accommodating matters with his friends, Henrietta Temple hears that he is about to be united to another lady, and considers herself a victim. Ferdinand falls into a dreadful fever, and Henrietta is obliged to travel for her health. She meets in Italy with a very refined nobleman, to whom she allows herself to be betrothed; and she also subsequently becomes one of the richest heiresses in England. A strange set of perplexities ensue as ever contributed to fill up three volumes. At length a delightful French count, one of those gods that are occasionally brought out of the novelist's machine to unravel or to cut an entangled thread of adventures, makes the refined nobleman marry the young lady to whom Ferdinand had been engaged; the heir of Armine obtains the object

of his idolatry, the house of Armine is restored, and, after considerable delay, owing to the marriage settlements having to be most carefully drawn up, as surely they ought to be in fashionable novels, everybody is happy.

There are, indeed, now and then occasional outbreaks of the Disraeli spirit. Ferdinand Armine falls in love at first sight, and then, as usual with this author's heroes, delivers a soliloquy, which deserves quoting as a companion and subdued imitation of the striking soliloquies in 'Contarini Fleming' and 'Alroy.' The Venetian Contarini Fleming, the Oriental Alroy, and the English Ferdinand Armine all soliloquise in the same style, the style which is truly Disraelian. When Ferdinand Armine had watched Henrietta Temple and her father out of sight, after their first meeting, and is at once, though about to be married to another person, smitten with Miss Temple, whom he had met for the first time only on this same day, he exclaims, "Miss Temple, indeed! Exquisite, enchanting, adored being! Without thee what is existence? How dull, how blank does everything now seem! It is as if the sun had just set. Oh, that form! that radiant countenance! that musical and thrilling voice! Those tones still vibrate on my ear, or I should deem it all a

vision! Will to-morrow ever come? Oh! that I could express to you my love, my overwhelming, my absorbing, my burning passion! Beautiful, beautiful Henrietta! Thou hast a name methinks I ever loved. Where am I? What do I say? What wild, what maddening words are these? Am I not Ferdinand Armine, the betrothed, the victim? Even now methinks I hear the chariot-wheels of my bride. God! if she be there—if she, indeed, be at Armine on my return—I'll not see her—I'll not speak to her—I'll fly. I'll cast to the winds all ties and duties. I will not be dragged to the altar a miserable sacrifice, to redeem, by my forfeited felicity, the worldly fortunes of my race. O! Armine, Armine!—she would not enter thy walls again if other blood but mine swayed thy fair demesne; and I—shall I give thee another mistress, Armine? It would, indeed, be treason! Without her I cannot live! Without her form bounds over this turf, and glances on these arbours, I never wish to view them! All the inducements to make the wretched sacrifice once meditated, then vanish; for Armine, without her, is a desert—a tomb—a hell! I am free, then. Excellent logician! But this woman—I am bound to her. Bound? The word makes me tremble. I shiver: I hear the clank of fetters! Am I, indeed, bound?

Ay! in honour. Honour and love! A contest! Pah! the Idol must yield to the Divinity!"

Genius, even when writing a fashionable love story, occasionally rises above the tame level of mediocrity. We have this glimpse of the fiery Disraeli the Younger, even in the respectable and quiet pages of 'Henrietta Temple.' In the last paragraph but one of the third volume, the political Disraeli for one moment makes his appearance, just in time, before the work is finished, to convince us that the author is still a worldly politician. We are told that, after the passing of the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill and the great Reform measure, the refined Lord Montford and Ferdinand Armine became members of the House of Commons; but that though they were both Whigs, yet they abstained in the most marked manner from voting on the Appropriation Clause; that Mr. Temple, the distinguished diplomatist, is also in the House, and acts entirely with Lord Stanley; and that all the great male personages in this novel of 'Henrietta Temple' will ultimately be found supporting "that British and National Administration which Providence has doubtless in store for these outraged and distracted realms." Mr. Disraeli was at this time, therefore, looking to the future, as we poor mortals, when not satis-

fied with our present blessings, are obliged to do. At length, for ten months, we had a real Derby national administration, in which the author of 'Henrietta Temple' was the brightest ornament; and, with the habitual discontent of humanity, we did not fully appreciate this blessing of a beneficent Providence.

A few months after the publication of 'Henrietta Temple,' Mr. Disraeli produced another novel of a more ambitious kind. In his earlier years, from many unmistakable indications, it is evident that he was one of Lord Byron's most enthusiastic worshippers. Byron's character was exactly of that kind which the author of 'Vivian Grey' and 'Contarini Fleming' could adore. There was all the dazzling glare of intellectual distinction, united with high birth, superficial accomplishments, and worldly admiration, with which the future leader of the Tory party could most keenly sympathise. The very faults, and even vices of the gifted peer, were such as Mr. Disraeli, in the portraits of his own heroes, has represented as virtues. All the gloom, vanity, sarcasm, wit, and coxcombry, which were combined in the titled poet, were so many letters of recommendation to Disraeli the Younger. Byron indeed was a literary hero after Mr. Disraeli's own heart; and in Vivian Grey, the

young author expressed his reverence for his favourite poet in no measured terms.

After full consideration, it may perhaps appear that many of Mr. Disraeli's earlier extravagances were derived from Byron. Captivated with the career of the brilliant nobleman, whose fame was in its zenith during Mr. Disraeli's youth, he determined to imitate, according to his ability, that character which he so much admired. He, like Byron, generally attempts to draw himself in the person of his heroes, and is ever making them the mouthpieces of his own opinions. The moral recklessness which Byron exhibited in Don Juan was so delightful in Mr. Disraeli's eyes, that in Vivian Grey he set about representing with the same recklessness an intellectual Don Juan, who was to be as "reckless of human minds" as Byron's moral Don Juan was "of human bodies." Mr. Disraeli evidently meditated in politics a career somewhat analogous to that of his great hero in poetry. He could not see how dreadfully defective in sterling moral qualities was that poet whom he imitated. He could not see how all the humane and noble virtues were sacrificed by that unfortunate nobleman, whose ruling principle was vanity, and not even the vanity of a man, but that, for the most part, of a schoolboy. He could not see that those

faults which the moralist might gently rebuke in the impetuous peer, whose education had been so neglected, became much more reprehensible in politics than they were in poetry; for eccentricity and madness have been allowed as privileges to second-rate poets in all ages, but the politician in his position cannot be permitted the same indulgences, because he deals, not with metres and rhymes, but with human beings, whose welfare must be deeply affected by his actions. He could not see that while the bard might forget the realities of every-day existence as he indulged in his imaginations, the legislator must look steadily at the world as it is, and remember that of all men he is the most responsible.

The poet deals with the imaginative, the politician with the moral world. Even good men cannot always be trusted to follow the impulses of their own benevolent hearts when they are devising schemes for the amelioration of the social condition of their fellow-creatures. A stern moral does, and must rule in this eminently moral world. This the political speculator, and still less the leader of a political party, can never afford to set aside; for the evil that he may do is incalculable; and when the moral principle is apparently forgotten, it is the duty of all men not to cheer it but to point it out, and meet it with reprobation.

After all, if we do not suffer ourselves to be lost in theories, if we but keep our hearts and minds in harmony with the moral structure of the universe, space will be found for all our better feelings to expand, and diffuse themselves abroad. The man of genius ought not to be ever kicking up his heels at the world, and practising himself the vice which he professes to condemn. The world is large enough, and there is work enough for the genius and the drudge. The worst of poor Byron was, that he never could be prevailed upon to do any earnest work, or to believe that there was any earnest work to be done on the earth. He thought that men had nothing to do but listen to his wailings on the themes, "how happy it is to be miserable," and "how virtuous it is to be wicked;" and he continued year after year sinking deeper and deeper in that slough of vice and iniquity into which he had plunged in his youth, and never had the manliness to get out of. The greatest injury that could be done to such a man, was to take him at his own estimate of himself, and listen to him as a much-injured, love-sick mortal, most interesting, most melancholy, most misanthropical, and most poetical. But when he was in his grave, and the evil he had done was unfortunately living after him, a true artist who undertook to delineate him

as he was, and as he appeared stripped of all the fopperies by which he had been surrounded, would have told a tale by which a moral might have been so pointed, and a lofty book so written, that all rising geniuses might have taken warning, and the countless millions who are not geniuses made happier, better, and more contented with their not unenviable condition.

In May, 1837, Mr. Disraeli published, under the title of 'Venetia,' the work which he had long planned, and in which, as he informed the public through the dedication to his then literary and political sponsor, Lord Lyndhurst, he had attempted to shadow forth, as "in a glass darkly," "two of the most renowned and refined spirits that have adorned these our latter days." The two most refined and renowned spirits were, of course, Byron and Shelley. This was another great effort, somewhat more pretentious than the recently published 'Henrietta Temple.' At the outset such a work was beset with difficulties; for everybody was more or less acquainted with the lives of the two heroes who were to be shadowed forth; and unless the author adhered strictly to his facts, all probability would be violated, and the reader's notions continually offended.

Mr. Disraeli represents Shelley separated from his wife, and a triumphant general on the side of

the Americans during the war of Independence; and Byron is made a Whig poet during the time of the Coalition Ministry. Byron is pictured as having a not very delicate or romantic intrigue with a Lady Monteagle, the wife of an eminent Whig statesman. One of Mr. Disraeli's habits has ever been to astonish his readers by telling them of some obscure person who was really a most important individual. In one of his works he informs us that the most profound of statesmen was Lord Shelburne, although we know so little about him; and here in 'Venetia,' we are informed that "next to Charles Fox, perhaps the most eminent and influential member of the Whig party was Lady Monteagle." Lady Monteagle, the most eminent member of the Whig party at the time of the Coalition Ministry! What then had become of Mr. Burke, who during the American war was more eminent as an opposition leader than even Charles Fox?

But there is no end to such absurdities when fact and romance are thus brought into collision. This is only a single specimen of the inextricable difficulties in which the author involved himself, which continue throughout his work, and render it neither a good representation of Byron and Shelley, nor an interesting tale. Never did an artist commit a greater mistake than Mr Disraeli

does when he places Shelley in the camp of the American colonists; for Shelley was altogether an intellectual offspring of the French Revolution; nor can his poetry nor his life be ever understood without being studied in connection with the agitated period in which his lot was cast. The struggle of American independence was essentially different from the outbreak of that strange, wild, atheistic spirit which broke forth in continental Europe. People are now, since eighteen forty-eight, beginning to understand that there was a diametrical difference between the old Puritan conflict with spiritual and civil tyranny, and the fearful explosions which have shaken the moral world during the last sixty years. The Americans carried on the war for their liberties in the same spirit as their forefathers of the seventeenth century; and the declaration of Independence was but the final conclusion of that contest which was commenced in the time of Archbishop Laud. This struggle was sooner or later inevitable. The shame of George the Third and his ministers is, that they precipitated the final moment, and made it as disgraceful to England as it possibly could be; for it was truly a contest for the rights of Englishmen against the tyranny of an English king. As it was in the days of Charles the First, so it was in the time of George

the Third. The Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence were both written with the heart's blood of Englishmen.

Shelley would have been regarded by the American colonists with almost as much distrust as he was by many respectable Englishmen. To make him an American general was at once incongruous and ridiculous. It was at once incongruous and ridiculous to make the bard, Shelley, a general at all; for, with his noble, dreamy, enthusiastic nature, he was altogether a man of speculation, not a man of action. The almost effeminate purity of his character renders it impossible to imagine him as Mr. Disraeli portrays him, a determined soldier, who, "at the head of his division, soon arrested the attention, and commanded the respect of Europe," and so powerfully contributed to the success of the American struggle, that he "received the thanks of Congress, of which he became a member." This is not Shelley; and it never could have been Shelley.

Indeed, it soon becomes evident that Mr. Disraeli has no very clear conception of the two great men whom he undertook to shadow forth in his novel; that the outline of Shelley has not the least resemblance to this great poet; and that what was eccentric and foolish in Byron's cha-

racter, is disagreeably exaggerated, and represented as admirable, instead of being reprehended. Bad as the morals of the fashionable world may have been at the time of the Coalition Ministry, most certainly no lady ever acted in so shameless a manner as Lady Monteagle is represented as doing; and Byron, with all his faults, was not such a coxcomb as the author of 'Venetia' paints him.

The most instructive reflections in 'Venetia' on the character of Lord Byron are also unfortunately not Mr. Disraeli's. In 1831 a very brilliant article on Moore's Life of Byron appeared in the June number of the 'Edinburgh Review;' and it will be found that the author of 'Venetia' has only paraphrased the essay in his observations on Lord Byron's career. One chapter of 'Venetia,' however, is more than a paraphrase of Mr. Macaulay's essay on Byron; it is one of the most deliberate plagiarisms ever committed. All the observations which Mr. Macaulay made on the morality of the English public are found as though they were Mr. Disraeli's own, incorporated wholesale into the eighteenth chapter of the fourth book of 'Venetia.' In June, 1837, of course, the article was not known so much as it was a few years later, when it was collected as one of Mr. Macaulay's essays; but still the au-

dacity of such a literary plagiarism is astonishing. This plagiarism was publicly indicated last year by a correspondent of the 'Morning Chronicle,' when people were astonished by the discovery of an oratorical appropriation of the same nature. It is amusing to find how Mr. Disraeli has endeavoured to get rid of this charge. In the new edition of 'Venetia,' published during this year, all Mr. Macaulay's sentences on English morality becoming once in seven years outrageous, we still find in Mr. Disraeli's novel: but after the first paragraph, Mr. Disraeli now says, "these observations of a celebrated writer apply to the instance of Lord Cadurcis;" while in the first edition of 'Venetia' there is not the least allusion to "these observations of a celebrated writer," and every reader unacquainted with the article would of course take them to be Mr. Disraeli's own original sentiments. But even this tardy acknowledgment is scarcely satisfactory; for many of the observations in the next paragraphs of this eighteenth chapter are quite as much Mr. Macaulay's as all the first paragraph unquestionably is; though there is no indication given of the source whence these were derived. Stolen goods never were returned with a worse grace.

But whatever might be the literary faults of

'Venetia,' and however much its author might have failed in presenting us with a just delineation of Byron and Shelley, the time was now fast approaching when one great wish of Mr. Disraeli's life was to be gratified. Three months after he had given the finishing touches to this literary picture, he was destined to find himself a member of the House of Commons. William the Fourth, the sailor King, died, and at the age of eighteen her Majesty Queen Victoria ascended the British throne. The nation was in a ferment of joy at the accession of their young sovereign, who seemed to recall the days of Elizabeth; and at the general election which was the consequence of the commencement of a new reign, Mr. Disraeli was chosen member for Maidstone. There was no taint of Radicalism about him now; he was a Tory, his colleague, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, a Tory; and the Radical Colonel Thompson was the defeated candidate.

Thus after many disappointments, the hour had at length come when a political career was fully opened to Mr. Disraeli. Hard had been the struggle; humiliating had been the numerous mortifications he had met with; often had the difficulties appeared almost insurmountable. A less determined man would long ago have retired in disgust from the field in which he had

received nothing but insult and defeat. But Mr. Disraeli had confidence in his destiny. The darkest hour is nearest the dawn; and just at the very moment when it appeared impossible for him to get into Parliament, the King died, the Parliament was unexpectedly dissolved, a new friend gave him a helping hand, and his name appeared as that of one of the newly-elected members of the first Parliament of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria.

After having carefully examined Mr. Disraeli's literary and political works, and endeavoured to appreciate his individual aims and his personal character, we may now accompany him to the grand and august stage on which he ever believed himself capable of performing a glorious part. Superficial observers only will consider the earlier part of such a career as the least interesting, and the least worthy of systematic and prolonged attention. It is not when a politician becomes the acknowledged leader of a party, and the accredited organ of its opinions, that his individual character can be the most fully displayed. The chief of a party is frequently of all men he who is most obliged to adopt the notions of others. This is seen in all countries and in all times. It is especially so in England, where politicians are so much under the influence of

the past, and where political creeds descend from father to son as an inheritance through many successive generations. But in youth and obscurity, and struggling with difficulties, when he is, to use Mr. Disraeli's own words, an isolated member of the political world, the real man is seen much more truly than when he is delivering stereotyped sentiments to his followers, and of course adapting his language to meet their prejudices. It is well that in England parties should have a decided course, and fixed principles. While we maintain these solid grounds of action, however dark may be the political future of the country, and however hopeless may be the condition of any party, the springs of national energy can never be dried up, nor their vivifying waters cease to fertilize our native soil. Yet much depends on the manner in which the youth and manhood of a politician is passed, and especially, when that politician is also a literary man. What was it that gave to all the views of Pitt and Fox a kind of narrowness from which they never could emancipate themselves? The routine of parliamentary business into which they plunged as soon as they were of age. What made Burke the most profound and most comprehensive of public men, with an inexhaustible fund of information on every subject which could

oome before a senator? Those years of study and retirement in which his life was spent until the age of thirty-six. Why was Sir Robert Peel's mind in a state of perpetual transition from the extreme doctrines of Toryism to the advanced liberal principles now professed by statesmen of every party? The exclusive and entirely one-sided education which, under the careful superintendence of his father, influenced so much his sensitive heart and his susceptible mind. It will be found in general, that, if we would understand the characters of public men, we shall have to study their earlier lives as much, and even more, than what would be considered the more exciting part of their careers. Genius will indeed rise superior to circumstances, yet these circumstances will still have no inconsiderable influence. But in the case of Mr. Disraeli most especially, his career as an author is perhaps even more instructive than his career as a politician; they have acted on each other, and reflect light on each other.

In the new scenes in which we have now to follow him, much which would otherwise be perplexing, must appear perspicuous to those who have dwelt on this solitary part of his life. He has had to struggle. He has had to labour. He has been covered with obloquy. But

the conviction that he was destined to play a great part on the political stage never altogether deserted him. The mysteries of predisposition were his favourite theme. It will now be seen how these yearnings for the senate were realized.

O'Connell and the editor of the 'Globe' may have laughed when they first learnt that Mr. Disraeli had really been elected a member of parliament. But what was their laughter to one who was only fulfilling his destiny? Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell may have also smiled when they were informed that this singular individual had at length gained his credentials to Westminster. To them the future seemed all clear; soon would this ludicrous aspirant after political power find his level; and after one or two frantic attempts to gain the ear of the House of Commons, be coughed down, and his ambitious longings extinguished for ever. Now the bells of all the steeples are ringing merrily. Another year of political strife is beginning, big with the hopes of Mr. Disraeli, the young member for Maidstone.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Parliament was summoned for November the 15th, and the speech was delivered from the throne on the 20th. That day the young Queen was received with repeated bursts of enthusiasm from all her subjects who crowded the streets through which she passed; and when she ascended the throne, and spoke in such sweet and gentle tones, in the presence of the lords and commons of England, the emotions excited in the hearts of all were deep and enduring. One of the young members of the House of Commons gazed upon that memorable spectacle with a flashing eye and a throbbing heart. Mr. Disraeli felt that the time had now most certainly come when all his youthful dreams were to be realized, and he was to be acknowledged as one of those great English statesmen who were to sway the

destinies of mankind. Now was the time to carry out those great projects which were first entertained six years before, in solitude and in foreign lands. Now was the time to humble those proud upstarts who had dared to laugh at his aspirations, and to brand as the mere efforts of vanity, the struggles of a noble ambition. Now was the time to redeem that pledge which had been given a year and a half ago, and to execute vengeance on that man who had dared to cover with opprobrium the name of Disraeli.

The member for Maidstone did not speak on the Address; but those who knew him well were certain that he would not allow many nights to pass before taking part in the discussion. And they were right.

On the 7th of December, the adjourned debate on the Irish Election Petitions was resumed. O'Connell had just delivered one of his most thrilling speeches, and laid Sir Francis Burdett prostrate in the dust; the House of Commons was in a state of the greatest excitement, when a singular figure, looking as pale as death, with eyes fixed upon the ground, and ringlets clustering round his brow, asked the indulgence which was usually granted to those who spoke for the first time, and of which he would show himself worthy by promising not to abuse it. He then

singled out O'Connell, who, he said, while taunting an honourable baronet with making a long, rambling, and jumbling speech, had evidently taken a hint from his opponent, and introduced every Irish question into his rhetorical medley. Two or three taunts were also directed at the Whigs; who had made certain intimations at clubs and elsewhere about the time "when the bell of our cathedral announced the death of our monarch." Then followed some of Mr. Disraeli's daring assertions, which were received with shouts of laughter, and loud cries of "Oh! oh!" from the ministerial benches. An allusion to "men of moderate opinions and of a temperate tone of mind," produced still more laughter; for it was considered that such a character was the very opposite of the individual who was addressing them. He entreated them to give him five minutes' hearing; only five minutes. It was not much. The House then became indulgent; but soon the shouts of laughter again burst forth, as Mr. Disraeli went on to say that he stood there not formally, but virtually, as the representative of a considerable number of members of Parliament. "Then why laugh?" he asked; "why not let me enjoy this distinction at least for one night?" It appeared

that he considered himself the representative of the new members. When, however, he spoke of the disagreement between "the noble Tityrus of the Treasury Bench and the Daphne of Liskeard;" declared that it was evident that this quarrel between the lovers would only be the renewal of love, and alluded to Lord John Russell as waving the keys of St. Peter in his hand, the voice of the ambitious orator was drowned in convulsions of merriment. "Now, Mr. Speaker, see the philosophical prejudice of man!" he ejaculated, with despair; and again the laughter was renewed. "I would certainly gladly," said Mr. Disraeli, most pathetically, "hear a cheer, even though it came from the lips of a political opponent." No cheer, however, followed; and he then added, "I am not at all surprised at the reception I have experienced. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. I will sit down now, but the time will come when you will listen to me!" He sat down: Lord Stanley, on the part of the Opposition, resumed the debate, and replied to O'Connell; for it was thought that Mr. Disraeli's speech had been a complete failure, and that O'Connell's address had not been answered. The ghost of the Caucasian Cæsar had really

appeared at Philippi, and been scared away by the jeers of the boisterous adherents of the Milesian Brutus.

More than one explanation of the failure of this maiden speech has been given. The critic who in general has been most favourable to the accomplished master of sarcasm, believes that this first speech was delivered in the bombastic style of 'Alroy,' and that the orator's failure was inevitable. This attempt to account for his temporary defeat will only be satisfactory to those who believe that there was a wonderful change in Mr. Disraeli's mental habits and style in future years. Now therewas nothing so remarkably bombastic in this first address; and it can be easily shown that even in Mr. Disraeli's most successful efforts, there is overstrained language which, even when the orator's abilities were fully admitted, provoked the laughter of the House of Commons. Some other explanation is necessary, and it lies on the surface.

Mr. Disraeli's individual appearance and style of speaking are peculiar. His art lies in taking his audience by surprise, and in delivering his most successful points as impromptus. This, of course, may be done effectually when the speaker has a command over his hearers, and

his intellectual ascendency is allowed; but every orator has, more or less, to prepare his audience for the reception of his speeches, and, until this can be done, it is not easy to make a very successful oratorical effort. Mr. Disraeli has so much of mannerism, that it was not to be expected he could please at his first appearance. Besides, it was in the memory of everybody that he had made a proud boast of seizing the first opportunity of crushing one of the most formidable public men of the time; and with all his early follies thus prominently before the world, and in presence of many of his great antagonist's friends; alone, and unsupported even by those who agreed with him in opinion, the powers of Demosthenes would have been unequal to such an occasion.

Mr. Disraeli failed simply because the House of Commons would not listen to him; nor was it prepared to endure from a young member a harangue full of personalities, though these personalities appear to have been quite as good as many which have been delivered since by the same man to an attentive audience, and received with loud applause. As it ever happens, much that is admired in an established reputation, appears contemptible in struggling merit. Mr. Disraeli has taken many liberties with the House,

and has been applauded for them in later years; but because he ventured to do so in his first speech, he was laughed at and coughed down. After all, this ridiculous reception was more disgraceful to those who laughed then, and cheer the same man now, than to him who believed that he might be permitted to do at once what he certainly has since accomplished. Gerard Hamilton was, perhaps, the only member of Parliament who gained a thoroughly triumphant success at his first appearance; but even Gerard Hamilton would not have been applauded had he immediately launched into personalities against the leading men of the day. Young orators, if they wish not to see the House of Commons rebel against them, must confine themselves to principles, avoid personalities, and speak only on such questions as they have thoroughly mastered. Thus the "hell of failure," as Mr. Disraeli, speaking from experience, terms it, may be avoided; for modesty in the young orator, as in the young lady, has many charms, such as no meretricious arts can equal.

Undoubtedly Mr. Disraeli's bosom that evening, after so glaring a failure, was a terrible hell; and perhaps all the successes of many years have not afforded him gratification to outweigh the agonizing catastrophe at the outset of his par-

liamentary career. The time so devoutly wished for had come, the long anticipated effort had been made, and nothing but mortification and defeat had been the result. Few would wish to exchange their quiet obscurity for the fiery frenzy of such an hour. Mr. Disraeli could not pass a member in the lobby without seeing a sneer on his face. All the friends who were interested in this first appearance, all the constituents who so eagerly canvass every speech of their representatives, would read the newspapers and know how lamentable had been Mr. Disraeli's discomfiture. Those detestable newspapers with their truth-telling sheets! Worse ten thousand times than rumour with her hundred tongues are the hieroglyphics of the reporter when he records how the brilliant author of so many political romances and satires, actually failed in his maiden speech. He who was to wind all Marquises of Carabas round his little finger, who was born to live amid eloquent faction, who was to be the great political regenerator of the age, at whose satire kings and ministers were to tremble, and who was to inflict on the great Irish agitator a castigation to be remembered for ever, was received with uproarious laughter, and was obliged to entreat honourable members to listen to him for five minutes, and even humbled him-

self to ask, and ask in vain, his opponents for a cheer.

Dreadful as was his disappointment, he soon became conscious of the great mistake he had made in thus endeavouring to take the House of Commons by storm. He then began to see that it was necessary for him to make his way by slow degrees, gradually to accustom gentlemen to listen to him for a few minutes, and never to attempt a set speech until he had, in some measure, gained the ear of the House. It is very instructive to trace his parliamentary history from this time until he reached the very summit of oratorical ambition, and became the sarcastic assailant of Sir Robert Peel. He had, in the midst of ridicule and disgrace, told his contemptuous auditory, that "one day they would listen to him," and he heroically worked his way until none could deny that he had fulfilled this bold prophecy.

He so far recovered from his defeat as to venture to say a few words the week afterwards on one of Mr. Serjeant Talfourd's Copyright Bills, and again some months later on the same question he made a very fair speech. An author certainly had a perfect right to speak on the law of copyright, and no Irish repealer or sneering Radical

durst interrupt him. Mr. Disraeli argued that authors were creators, and their works therefore the most rational and the most indubitable kind of property. On Mr. Villiers's annual motion for a committee on the Corn Laws, Mr. Disraeli also delivered a short speech, during this session. He said that a friend had complained to him of the competition in Belgium against the British manufacturing interest, and on being asked how, replied that they were doing a great deal in small nails. So it appeared, said Mr. Disraeli, that all the British manufacturers had to fear, was a competition in " small nails." The House listened to him, and he felt that he had made a successful point. One step was therefore gained, and he very judiciously said nothing more at the time on the subject; but concluded by modestly thanking the House for having given him its attention. Before the session closed, he even ventured to say something on the Bill for reforming the Irish Corporations. This was a delicate subject; but he prudently confined himself to a few sentences; and declared that the government, in reference to Ireland, was pursuing a most profligate course.

This is the history of Mr. Disraeli's first parliamentary session. He had made at first a most

signal failure; had then only presented himself to the House for a few minutes at a time; carefully husbanded every little gain, and became thankful for small mercies. By the August of 1838, though he certainly had not been acknowledged as a great orator, nor had at all succeeded in any great effort, still he had, in some degree, redeemed his first disgrace, and had made some sensible remarks. He might, therefore, without shame, go down to his constituents, and look forward hopefully to renew his quiet and steady struggle with difficulties at the commencement of the next year. He doubtless never forgot his great aim of some day soaring where he was now obliged to crawl, and every little cheer was one feather added to the plume which would at length adorn his brow.

In the session of 1839, he for a time persevered in obtaining small successes and little victories, but events occurred while Parliament was sitting, of very serious consequence, and Mr. Disraeli again had recourse to his extreme democratic theory of Toryism. Clouds soon gathered round the maiden throne which had appeared so resplendent but a few short months before. Something more terrible than even the ministerial crisis, which was the consequence of the debate on

Jamaica, a convulsion more dreadful than even that which shook to its centre Buckingham Palace, when Sir Robert Peel was going to change the ladies of the bedchamber, soon demanded the attention of the British Parliament. The gaunt spectre, Chartism, appeared, and menaced all the civilization, order, and beauty, which had but lately surrounded the young princess who had been summoned in the season of youth and romance to wield the sceptre of England. The riots of Birmingham followed the presentation of the National Petition. Country members went out of town, commanded troops of yeomanry, dispersed mobs, and then returned to London by late trains, that they might vote on their party divisions. The time required a strong government, and never had the country a weaker; though it is but just to admit, that this weakness was as much the fault of the opposition as of the ministers. The great party under the guidance of Sir Robert Peel, when it had triumphed, could only follow out that very course of policy, which it had so much condemned in the administration of Lord Melbourne.

On the Chartist insurrection there was, of course, but one opinion, and the Tories supported the Government. Mr. Disraeli, however, was

an exception. His fierce hatred of the Whigs never slept. The more it became important that the ministry should at least be supported at all hazards until tranquillity was restored, the more determined he became in his resistance. While the ministers demanded soldiers, he only spoke of grievances. When they asked for more police, he declaimed against the New Poor Law. On the vote for the Birmingham police, on July the 23rd, he said that the Government ought to inquire into the causes of this insurrectionary spirit, and he actually divided with two extreme Radical members against the proposition. He opposed the introduction of the County Constabulary Bill, because Lord John Russell had declared that civil war had commenced, and while raising five thousand additional soldiers, had not given a detailed account of the state of the country. On this occasion the Chancellor of the Exchequer reproached Mr. Disraeli for attempting to turn into a party measure, a Bill introduced for the immediate protection of life and property; and Mr. Fox Maule, the Under Secretary of State, accused him of being the advocate of riot and confusion. This was the first time that Mr. Disraeli had been personally attacked by minis-

ters. He was of course delighted. He felt that he was becoming of some importance, and therefore determined, in his newspaper satirical style, to keep himself forward. When the Bill was introduced, he seized the opportunity of making another speech during the same night, and affirmed that Under Secretaries of State were coarse, vulgar, and ill-bred. He had heard some comments made upon him by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and an Under Secretary of State, which he did not choose to pass unnoticed. Indeed, from a Chancellor of the Exchequer to an Under Secretary of State, was a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous; though the sublime was, on this occasion, rather ridiculous, and the ridiculous rather trashy. How he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and how the government to which he belonged, became a government, it would be difficult to tell; like flies in amber,

"One wondered how the devil they got there."

This is not in very good taste; but it is interesting as showing that Mr. Disraeli had now quite recovered his spirits, and was as bold and confident as ever. The outbreak of the Chartists was, in the highest degree, gratifying to him. As in the days of the Reform Bill, he endeavoured

to combine Toryism and O'Connellism, he was now intent on uniting Conservatism and Chartism. He was not supported by a single member of the Tory party. Everybody but himself felt, that when a convention was bearding Parliament, agitators were counselling insurrection, and towns were in the possession of mobs, matters were too serious for mere factious hatred of the Whigs. Mr. Disraeli however became more resolute in his detestation of his Venetians, when even the most extreme Liberals were aghast at the riots, and the most stubborn Tories rallied round the Whig government.

On the question that the National Petition should be taken into consideration, Mr. Disraeli rose after Lord John Russell, and declared that the Charter was owing to the Reform Bill. The cry had been for cheap and centralized government, and in obedience to that cry the civil rights of the English people had been invaded. This was the real cause of the Charter. It had been produced by the New Poor Law, and similar measures which had abrogated the civil rights of the people. We had now a middle class government; and this monarchy of the middle-classes might one day shake our institutions and endanger the throne. He was not ashamed to say,

that, though he disapproved of the Charter, he sympathised with the Chartists.

Some years afterwards, in a novel, he alluded to one of his heroes as the only member, who, in that "proud Parliament," had "pronounced his conviction that the rights of labour were as sacred as those of property," and that "if a difference were to be established, the interests of the living ought to be preferred." He thought himself singularly benevolent and philanthropical.

Now everybody, more or less, pitied those poor deluded Chartists, who abandoned themselves to the guidance of selfish and unprincipled men. But Mr. Disraeli was the only member of Parliament who seemed to think that they might be allowed to pull down houses, and attack the civil authorities with impunity. He believed that he was sympathising with the Chartists, while he was really countenancing their attempt to dictate to the estates of the realm; and while it is certain that they would have rejected with scorn any measures that he might have attempted to substitute for the five points. He believed, at the same time, that he was a Tory, while he stood alone in the avowal of these sentiments. It will be found that Mr. Disraeli's sympathies with the Chartists resolve themselves into a

mere party dislike of the Whigs, and his Tory principles into his individual opinions.

Though Mr. Disraeli objected to the votes for the maintenance of the police, when civil order was threatened, and towns in danger of being sacked, he did not indicate a single remedy for the terrible social evils with which he upbraided the Whigs. Few philanthropists will deny that much of the capital of discontent, on which Frost, Williams, and Jones traded, was the product of ignorance, and of that selfish let-alone policy which ministers of all parties had long pursued. Mr. Carlyle, in that celebrated book on 'Chartism,' which was published a few months afterwards, ascribed much of this social misery to the utilitarian doctrine of "laissez-faire,' and earnestly advocated some great measure of popular education, even though ministers could get the different religious parties to agree in nothing but the alphabet. He called on the prime minister to stand up at all events for the alphabet; and unquestionably even a universal acquaintance with the twenty-four letters would have been a great step gained, and from which a still greater advance might have been successfully made.

Lord John Russell did, even in this session,

bring in an Education Bill, and Mr. Disraeli, the champion of Chartism, the denouncer of utilitarianism, the hater of the manufacturing system, opposed it, and on resuming the discussion, delivered the longest speech he had yet dared to attempt since his terrible first catastrophe. The author of 'Coningsby,' in this debate, avowed himself a decided supporter of the system of voluntary efforts; and while ascribing the social phenomenon of Chartism to the weakness of the Whig government, with surprising inconsistency, said that "English statesmen had always hitherto held, that the individual should be strong, and the Government weak." Mr. Disraeli is thus seen as the eloquent exponent of this "laissez-faire," to which he attributed all the blessings of English social life. State education, he said, was only found in paternal governments, of which Persia and China were the models. A people might be enslaved, and the political institutions yet be free. England was in danger, not from infidelity, but from fanaticism. The cellar-life of manufacturing towns arose out of the vicissitudes to which every manufacturing country was subject. The great object which every statesman ought to have in view, was, to encourage the habits of self-government among the

people. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, with these sentiments, disapproved of the ministerial scheme, and voted against it.

A member of Parliament, who, while proclaiming himself a political philosopher and a practical statesman, refuses soldiers and police to the ministers, when physical force is openly arrayed against legal authority, sympathises with the Chartists, asserts that their discontent arises from the weakness of the government, and opposes Education Bills because the government ought always to be weak, cannot be said to have any intelligible scheme of policy. And such was the opinion of both Lord Stanley and Sir Robert Peel, as well as of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston. Still Mr. Disraeli's time was not unprofitably spent. By continually asking questions, and delivering short but most paradoxical speeches, he was at least making himself known, and not permitting himself to be regarded as a mere representative unit. On August the 9th, before the session closed, he gave a kind of programme of measures which had, in his opinion, assailed the rights of the people, and consequently produced Chartism. The ministers had revolutionized the parochial jurisdiction of England, attacked the ancient police of the country,

tampered with the old local administration of justice, confiscated the ancient patrimony of the people, assaulted trial by jury, and destroyed the venerable corporations. He astonished honourable members by telling them that "the House of Commons was the youngest constituency in the world;" and that their celebrated constitution was a system under which "the sovereign could do no wrong, and the government no right."

All these daring assertions, the eagerness to distinguish himself, and the bold flippancy he exhibited as he was getting a footing in the House, show how singularly identical were the member for Maidstone, and the Disraeli the Younger of earlier days. And now, another circumstance must be recorded, still more decisive of Mr. Disraeli's identity.

Just as the session was closing, he appeared under another new character. At this time Messrs. Colburn announced 'The Tragedy of Count Alarcos, by the Author of Vivian Grey.' It was addressed to Lord Francis Egerton, and in the preface, dated May, 1839, at the moment when riot and rebellion were raging throughout the land, and all people were trembling at the wild outbreaks of misguided multitudes, Mr.

Disraeli calmly wrote—"I dedicate to a poet, an attempt to contribute to the revival of English tragedy." This was the old poetic spirit of 'The Revolutionary Epic' once more bursting out; and it is a melancholy fact, that the lyre which had been recovered from Limbo, does not appear more enchanting after five years of unbroken silence. The drama is founded on the fine Spanish ballad of the 'Count Alarcos and the Infanta Solisa,' which Mr. Lockhart has so finely translated into English; but Mr. Disraeli has altogether lost in his tragedy the sweetness and pathos of the verses. Feebleness after 'The Revolutionary Epic' might have been anticipated from Mr. Disraeli's lyre; but it will appear that he has even made his drama disgusting and impure. He represents the banishment of the Count Alarcos as caused by the queen, who, he says, made love to the hero, and was jealous even of her child; the king, as counselling his own daughter to marry the Prince of Hungary, and still be her lover's paramour; the Count himself as tempting his wife to be an adulteress, and murdering her, not by the king's express command, but through love of power. Is it surprising that such a horrible plot was not likely to revive the English drama? Revolting, however, as the plot of the piece is, it

is not more happily executed. It has all the faults of Mr. Disraeli's other poetical attempts, and is unnatural, bombastic, and repulsive.

Far differently would Shakspeare have treated so fine a subject. He would have shown us Count Alarcos really attached to his wife, the love of the princess, the command of the king to choose between the Infanta's hand and the scaffold, the struggle between duty and affection on the part of the Count's noble wife. He would have given us such scenes as would have drawn tears from all eyes, and would above all, have most carefully avoided the least impurity. What dramatist would voluntarily seek impurity? After taunting such a man as Lord John Russell with having mistaken the enthusiasm of travel, and the inspiration of a romantic country, for poetic power, and on his return from Spain publishing the feeblest of tragedies, who could expect to see Mr. Disraeli also publish a tragedy inspired in Spain, and certainly quite as feeble as Don Carlos? "Years have flown away," says Mr. Disraeli, in his preface to this tragedy, "since, rambling in the Sierras of Andalusia beneath the clear light of a Spanish moon, and freshened by the sea-breezes that had wandered up a river from the coast, I first listened to the chant of that

terrible tale. It seemed to me rife with all the materials of a tragic drama; and I planned, as I rode along, the scenes and characters of which it appeared to me susceptible."

Mr. Disraeli's tragedy of 'Count Alarcos' was therefore inspired in the same scenes and under the same circumstances as Lord John Russell's tragedy of 'Don Carlos.' But Lord John Russell's work was really the production of his youth, before he became a politician; and he never taunted any one else with poetical feebleness. Mr. Disraeli's work was written during his maturity, after he had entered public life, and three years after he had twitted Lord John Russell with having mistaken the youthful enthusiasm and the excitement of travel for poetical inspiration. Nay, even in later years Mr. Disraeli cannot forbear now and then reminding Lord John of his early poetry. On a very recent occasion, after Lord John had ceased to be prime minister, the author of 'The Revolutionary Epic,' and 'Count Alarcos,' said, "the noble lord is still a poet!" and showed himself entirely forgetful of his own ambitious poetry in his eagerness to raise a laugh at the more modest verse of the Whig leader.

Whenever Mr. Disraeli has a point, he cannot

forbear making it, though a little calm consideration might teach him that the mirth he excites against others could frequently be turned against himself. There is, too, a determined perseverance in his method of annoyance. No matter what discomfiture he may meet with, he is resolute in his manner of attack.

Some important ministerial modifications occurred between the sessions of 1839 and 1840. On the day when the Parliament was prorogued, a writ was issued for the borough of Cambridge, in consequence of Mr. Spring Rice being sent into the House of Lords with the title of Lord Monteagle. Mr. F. Baring then became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Other alterations also took place; so that, although the same men had the direction of affairs, many of them changed places. Lord John Russell went from the Home to the Colonial Office, Mr. Labouchere became President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Macaulay, Secretary at War, and the Marquis of Normanby, Home Secretary. It was evident that these changes involved no change of policy. Mr. Disraeli pretended that they did. Just as the Parliament was being prorogued, in the autumn of 1839, he demanded explanations; and before the Address was read by the Speaker, at the commencement

of the session of 1840, he again asked what the policy of the new cabinet was to be? He would have it that there was a new ministry. He quoted his favourite Lord Shelburne's opinion, to the effect that in the formation of a new cabinet, an exposition of its policy ought ever to be given. Mr. Disraeli received no reply to his question. But he had made the last speech in the late session, and the first speech in that which was then beginning. This was certainly opening the parliamentary campaign with spirit. It was plain that the Whigs could not hold out much longer; and Mr. Disraeli determined that before the inevitable hour of their dissolution should arrive he would make himself of so much importance as to be certainly regarded as an acquisition by that great Tory leader whose praise he had so often chanted, and whose star was now fast ascending.

There was no division on the Address. Sir Robert Peel very properly felt that the day on which Her Majesty had announced to Parliament her intended marriage with Prince Albert, was not a proper time for a party motion.

But a very few days afterwards, a vote of want of confidence was moved by Sir John Yarde Buller; and Mr. Disraeli made an effort. He said that he was proud to follow Sir Robert Peel. The

country was in a most unsatisfactory condition. Sir George Grey had said that there was an alliance between the opposition and the Chartists. He was not ashamed to say that he wished more sympathy had been shown by both sides of the House with millions of their fellow-subjects. Ministers had told them that Chartism was dying. The fire had, however, again broken out in districts where the labourers enjoyed comfort and even affluence. The time might come, when the Chartists would discover that in a country so aristocratic as England, even treason, to be successful, must be patrician. "When Wat Tyler failed, Henry Bolingbroke changed a dynasty; and when Jack Straw was hanged, a Lord John Straw might become Secretary of State." The great want of England was a strong Government. The present occupants of the Treasury Bench were a middling party, and a middling party in the State was in the position of the gentleman in the fable, who took the oyster, and gave a shell to each of the contending adversaries.

Mr. Disraeli thus, on principle, admires the two extreme parties more than any moderate political section. He can admire Toryism; he can admire Chartism. But what he abominates is moderation. He might, with some plausibility, maintain, as he has ever done, that he

has never changed the principles on which he contested High Wycombe in 1832; for it is his very nature thus to bring opposites together and to join contrasts. He was at once the champion of the cottager and the noble, and the systematic opponent of the middle classes. He roundly asserted in the House of Commons a very few months after this time, that the aristocracy and the labouring multitude form the nation.

This theory might suit other countries, such as Spain, or even France; but certainly never was any doctrine more unfitted to the England of this era. In 1832, it is quite certain that had the two extreme parties not had between them a sound middle party, more powerful than either or than both together, they would have massacred each other. When extremes meet, destruction is inevitable. All that is really valuable in English society would be entirely lost, if the middle classes were to be put out of view. They reconcile and unite the two ends of the social scale; and by their energy and industry make the aristocracy still more illustrious, and the poorer class still more manly and independent. We may take it for an undeniable political and social truth, that he who would combine the nobility and the multitude against the middle classes of England, is the common enemy of them all.

He is neither the friend of the aristocracy nor of the labourers. He may call himself a Tory, but he is in reality a social revolutionist of the school of Louis Blanc.

Mr. Disraeli committed a great mistake, if he ever supposed that the declaration of such opinions would, under any circumstances, recommend him as a candidate for office to Sir Robert Peel. The then Tory chief, of all public men, perhaps most detested extremes. Though the leader of an aristocratic party, he was never an aristocrat. He sympathised fully with the middle classes, amongst whom he had been bred. He was eminently attached to the privileges of the House of Commons. As Mr. Disraeli certainly did not at this time meditate an opposition to Sir Robert Peel, nor even contemplate coming into office under this minister's auspices, he was decidedly most unfortunate in selecting the topics of his speeches. He defended the Chartist libellers, Lovett and Collins, and said, amid loud laughter, that Lord John Russell had refused to acknowledge what the Star Chamber had admitted: while Sir Robert Peel supported the Government, and, as though in reprehension of Mr. Disraeli, openly asserted that such men deserved no sympathy. In the celebrated Privilege question, Mr. Disraeli denounced the House of Commons

as tyrants; as usual, drew a parallel between 1640 and 1840; made it appear that Lord John Russell and the Marquis of Lansdowne were more determined parliamentarians than Pym and Hampden; indulged in long quotations from Lord Clarendon's history; and hinted that another bold usurper might walk into the House, and order the mace to be taken away: while Sir Robert Peel supported the House of Commons in protecting its printer, and voted for the Bill by which this privilege was made a law. Mr. Disraeli condemned the employment of the factory inspectors as spies on the Chartists: while on this question also Sir Robert Peel supported the Government. Yet these were some of the most important questions of the session of 1840; and at this time Mr. Disraeli believed that he was following Sir Robert Peel, and winning the golden opinions of his leader, whom he was "proud to follow." Sir Robert Peel was a good judge of human character; he never liked men who constantly disagreed with him while loudly proclaiming that they were proud to be his followers.

Mr. Disraeli's admiration of Sir Robert, and his contempt for the Whig ministers kept pace with each other. If there were one minister, however, more than another for whom he had

at this time, and for some years afterwards, a most ludicrous contempt, it was Lord Palmerston. The parliamentary experience of the member for Maidstone, had not increased his reverence for the Foreign Secretary. Lord Palmerston was still the Sporus of politics, the sleek and long-tailed rat that 'Runnymede' had treated with such chaste vituperation. The commercial treaty with France had just been laid on the table of the House, and before the session of 1840 terminated, during a discussion on the foreign commercial system, Mr. Disraeli favoured the House with his ideas on high policy. He is of course never satisfied with allowing our foreign policy to depend on the state of the political world in different times. He must ever be profound and philosophical, and demonstrate who are our permanent and traditional allies. The orator commenced this speech by intimating that he would attempt to infuse into the discussion a more comprehensive spirit. Lord Palmerston had, during the last ten years, adopted a new system of foreign alliances, and told them that the first guarantee of his intention would be a commercial treaty with France. That treaty, after a lapse of nine yeats, had now appeared. The Foreign Secretary, in forming his new arrangements, had

inflicted upon the country the loss of commerce with twenty one millions of men in Poland, and on the Black Sea; and in order to cement this French alliance, he had supported French interests in Belgium, Spain, and Portugal. France had betrayed us in several parts of the globe. She had betrayed us at Morocco, and Buenos Ayres, in Egypt, and on the eastern coast of Africa. The Tory principles of commercial policy, were to seek an alliance with Austria. This, Lord Palmerston was at last obliged to do, after he had found that the vaunted friendship of France was hollow. The Austrian alliance was the old traditionary policy of the country. By nature, and by all the relations of trade and commerce, no two countries were so calculated to be great and influential allies, as England and Austria. Lord Palmerston, in cultivating his French alliance, had followed an eccentric and erratic course. We had suffered from France losses and indignities which we should not have been subjected to had he allied England with Austria. By his French alliance he had more deeply injured British commerce than any English statesman, and had sown the seeds of events, that it might be feared would shake the empire to its centre.

This was Mr. Disraeli's opinion on what our foreign commercial policy, and whom our allies ought to be in the July of 1840. It thus appeared that an Austrian alliance was the true interest of England, had always been our traditional policy, and had especially been the policy of Tory statesmen. We shall soon find Mr. Disraeli talking in another tone. We shall soon find him demonstrating with the same great historical knowledge, and the same profound political philosophy, that the French alliance has always been the best for England, that Mr. Pitt's foreign commercial policy was established on a sound French alliance, and that this was the central point of all genuine traditional Tory policy. Mr. Disraeli's ingenuity and versatility in finding authorities and philosophy for opposite courses of action, are certainly extraordinary. He has, more than any other man living, adopted the advice of William Gerard Hamilton, who, in his sententious treatise on Parliamentary Logic, says to aspiring statesmen, "You know the consequences you want: find out a principle to justify them." This is what Mr. Disraeli is ever doing. Whatever may be the consequences he wants, he is sure to find out a principle for their justification.

When Parliament met in the January of 1841, the time had indisputably arrived for the downfal of the Whig government, that was slowly dragging its length along. The proud Reform ministers, once supported by a majority of three hundred members, could barely muster three hundred on the greatest divisions, and could seldom obtain a majority of twenty. All men saw that the feeble existence of that which had been so great and powerful, must now come to an end. It cannot be said that the administration was regretted, as it was prostrate upon its bed of death. A most unreasonable dislike of the men, even more than of the measures of the government, was now entertained by that great majority of the people whose opinions are ever fluctuating. Mr. Disraeli was of course one of those who most exulted over the impending catastrophe. When the Whigs were all-powerful he had denounced them; and now, when they were at length the objects of almost universal opprobrium, his was not a moral and intellectual temperament to sympathise with the fallen.

The first act of the Whig ministers was to bring in their Poor Law Amendment Bill. When Lord John Russell moved the second reading, Mr. Disraeli rose and proposed that it should be read that day six months. His

speech was of course, like all his speeches at this time, peculiarly profound. The union of parishes, he said, was a total revolution in the parochial jurisdiction of England. Yet this parochial jurisdiction was much more ancient than the political constitution, and bore a much nearer affinity to the lower classes of society than any political forms which could be invented. This alteration was a great social revolution. The parochial constitution had been destroyed through merely sordid considerations. But the country had not gained, even pecuniarily. The legislature had treated the poor as criminals. The formation of workhouses was the portentous creation of Reform legislation. But this pauper system of the present government was perfectly hostile and adverse to the character, the manners, and the spirit of the people. It had been originally prompted by mere financial considerations, and in practice had utterly failed. It had been the prime and secret cause of many of the recent popular outbreaks. If such a system were persisted in, neither of the ends for which it was formed would be obtained. The people would not be quiet. Their maintenance would not be cheap.

Mr. Disraeli's amendment was seconded by the Radical, Mr. Wakley. It was unfair to cha-

racterize the New Poor Law as a purely Whig measure, when it had been supported by Sir Robert Peel and many of the most important members of the Tory party. Even at this time, Mr. Disraeli found himself in a different lobby to the leader whom he was so anxious to conciliate. Sir Robert again voted with the ministers.

In the great party struggle on the Sugar Duties a struggle which was prolonged throughout eight days, Mr. Disraeli endeavoured to make amends for his slight difference of opinion by volunteering in Sir Robert Peel's defence. He did not share in the apprehension which had prevailed in all times about the decline of British commerce. In support of his opinion he showed that our exports with France were now 2,500,000, while in 1829 they were only 450,000; but he forgot that he had only very lately condemned that policy by which our commerce with France had so prodigiously increased. He concluded with a panegyric on Sir Robert Peel, whom Lord John Russell had accused of faction.

But when the final moment of Whig government had come, Mr. Disraeli's praise of Sir Robert, and his abuse of the Whigs, were both carried to the extreme.

During the debate on the vote of want of con-

fidence, Mr. Disraeli commenced his speech with a most elaborate eulogium of the right honourable baronet, who was then, of course, on the threshold of office. Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Disraeli said, "had been placed in an age of rapid civilization and rapid transition, and had adapted the practical character of his measures to the condition of the times." Sir Robert Peel, "when in power, had never proposed a change which he did not carry, and, when in opposition never forgot that he was at the head of the Conservative party." Sir Robert Peel "had never employed his influence for factious purposes, and had never been stimulated in his exertions by a disordered desire of obtaining office." Sir Robert Peel, "above all, had never carried himself to the opposition benches by making propositions by which he was not ready to abide." Sir Robert Peel, "whether in or out of office, had done his best to make the settlement of the new constitution of England work for the benefit of the present time, and of posterity."

After such a high-flown exordium in praise of the Conservative leader, Mr. Disraeli entertained the House with a discourse on the times of Sir Robert Walpole, who, though a Whig, he declared to be one of the greatest ministers Eng-

land had ever known, and with whose times, Mr. Disraeli assured his hearers, he was well acquainted, for he had recently visited the library of the House of Commons, and studied that portion of political history. After heartily abusing the unfortunate Whig ministers, who, he said, had remodelled the House of Commons, insulted the House of Lords, assaulted the Church, abrogated the colonial institutions, assailed the municipalities of the kingdom, attacked both rich and poor, and now in their last moments were making war at one fell swoop on the colonial, the commercial, and the agricultural interests, Mr. Disraeli concluded his speech as he had begun it, by praising Sir Robert Peel, who might now have the opportunity of establishing a government which would have the confidence of the education, the property, and he sincerely believed, the enlightened feeling of the great body of the nation.

So violent was Mr. Disraeli's language against the Whigs, that as soon as he had sat down, Mr. T. B. Hobhouse rose, and said the honourable member for Maidstone ought to be the last man to indulge in taunts and sneers at his political opponents, for he had gone down to High Wycombe with that convenient variety of opinions which allowed him to be proposed by a Radical

and seconded by a Tory. When Mr. Hobhouse had finished his speech, Mr. Disraeli again rose, and said that his opinions at that present moment were exactly the same as when he was a candidate for High Wycombe.

The vote of want of confidence was carried by a majority of one. The ministers dissolved Parliament. Mr. Disraeli did not again present himself to the choice of the discriminating electors of Maidstone. He was elected for Shrewsbury. The new Parliament was summoned to meet on August the 19th, to decide the fate of the Whig administration. An amendment was moved on the Address. It was known that the followers of Sir Robert Peel had a decided majority, and the debate could therefore only be considered as a matter of form. The defeat of the Whigs was inevitable, but they certainly died game. Mr. Disraeli spoke after his old Taunton opponent, Mr. Labouchere, again voted in favour of Sir Robert Peel, and characterized the speech from the throne as the last effort of an expiring government desirous of laying the foundation of a nascent opposition. By Mr. Bernal, jun., the popular member for High Wycombe, Mr. Disraeli was again reminded of his early electioneering exploits. After Mr. Bernal, Sir Charles Napier rose and said that he must answer the speech

of another opponent, for that of the honourable member for Shrewsbury was entirely beyond his comprehension. The amendment was carried by a majority of 91; the Whigs resigned, and Sir Robert undertook the charge of forming an administration.

And now came the anxious season of expectation. What office was the uncompromising opponent of the Whigs, the sworn enemy of O'Connell, the eloquent exponent of pure Toryism, the honourable member for Shrewsbury to occupy? He fully expected place. A common friend informed Sir Robert Peel that Mr. Disraeli was quite prepared to take office under the right honourable Baronet; and Mr. Disraeli himself afterwards admitted that had Sir Robert offered him some small office in 1841, he would have accepted it. Days passed away; the great offices of state were filled up one after another; at length, even the humbler places had their dignitaries allotted to them; and yet no situation was awarded to Mr. Disraeli. The Tory government he had so long foreseen, and whose battles he believed himself to have so often fought, was at length formed, but the Tory champion was still a private person.

The fact is, the wary first minister was by no means prepossessed in his admirer's favour. Mr.

Disraeli might declare that his opinions were still the same as when he contested High Wycombe—he might himself believe that hatred of the Whigs would cover a multitude of sins in the eyes of a Tory leader—he might suppose that he had gained high honour by his newspaper controversies—he might think it was a recommendation to have it whispered that he was the author of the letters of 'Runnymede'—he might imagine that it was clever and dexterous to ascribe the social evils of Chartism and pauperism to the Whigs, and the Whigs alone;—but though he might deceive himself, he could not deceive others; and of all men, he could deceive Sir Robert Peel the least. That minister knew men well. He was never violent himself, and disliked violence in his supporters. Though so long opposed to the Whigs, he never lost their respect, and was always treated by them with deferential regard. He was sensible that his government could only be satisfactorily carried on with the support of the middle classes of England. This great and powerful part of the community he was determined to keep with him, and he knew well that he could never have its support and approbation of such doctrines as Mr. Disraeli had propounded. It was easy enough for an inge-

nious, but whimsical mind, to declare that the aristocracy and the labourers formed the nation ostentatiously to sympathize at once with peers and peasants, landlords and Chartists, and to denounce middle parties and moderate Reformers. But it was certain that no experienced English statesman would ever profess such opinions, and that no administration formed on such principles would ever be endured by the English people for a single day.

Sir Robert, therefore, shunned Mr. Disraeli. He even thought very little of the abilities of the Tory champion, whose vagaries had been so ridiculous that Mr. Disraeli had no credit for the great talents he really possessed.

CHAPTER IX.

HAD there been any chance of meeting Sir Robert with success, Mr. Disraeli might have gone into opposition as soon as he learnt that his pretensions were disregarded by the new prime minister. But Peel was then all-powerful. He was at the head of the Tory gentlemen of England, and supported by the great interests of the empire. The country was tired of the Whigs, and their financial embarrassments were considered undeniable proofs that they were unsafe politicians. There was no chance of forming a third party, when the Conservatives were exulting in their triumph. It was necessary that Mr. Disraeli should either become a humiliated Whig, or consent to remain a follower of Sir Robert Peel. He determined to support the government; for many people

believed that this ministry would endure as long as the prime minister lived; and there was a probability of conciliating him, if the Whigs could be effectually assailed by one who had no official connection with the administration. Pocketing his disappointment as well as he could, Mr. Disraeli still continued in his own self-chosen office as the uncompromising opponent of the Whigs.

On the 8th of March, 1842, he appeared in a more ambitious light than any in which he had previously figured. In an elaborate and lengthy speech, evidently intended to be a most triumphant and statesmanlike display, he made a motion for blending the consular and diplomatic establishments. This subject was well chosen for gratifying his settled dislike of the Whigs, and particularly for showing his supreme contempt for their late Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The utter scorn in which he held Lord Palmerston, was singularly evinced in this speech; indeed, it is evident that the motion, though professedly directed to a public reform, was really a studied personal attack on the brilliant Foreign Secretary. It would, perhaps, be impossible for Mr. Disraeli to confine himself to the exposition of a great principle; and none of his speeches afford more incontestable evidence

than this on the consular establishments, of his inveterate habit of indulging in personalities, under the pretence of some great public object.

He said that there was no foundation for the difference between the consular and diplomatic establishments. The consular establishment was held to be inferior to the diplomatic. That commercial interests were inferior to political interests, was not an avowal for a great commercial country like England to make. There was really no difference between them. In a country where commerce was one of the principal sources of public wealth, a commercial interest was a political interest of the highest class. In practice, no distinction was made between the two establishments. He then went into a long detail of diplomatists who performed the duties of consuls, and of consuls who performed the duties of diplomatists, and hazarded many personal allusions to obscure officials in various parts of the world. Different consuls were charged with incapacity. The consular office had opened its portals wide as a refuge for the destitute. Lord Palmerston had provided for political partisans by reviving offices which he had previously declared to be useless; and the immediate consequence was, that incapable consuls were chosen.

Such appointments were only disgraceful to the person who made them; all people of broken fortunes had been made consuls. Mr. Disraeli did not deny that political followers ought to be provided for; Lord Palmerston might even be permitted, as he had done, to choose his own relations. The name of Temple was a great name in our diplomatic history. Mr. Disraeli then made a feint of criticising one or two consular appointments of the Conservative government; for he was, he said, determined to be impartial. The consular system ought to be abolished. It was wholly adapted to a former age.

Lord C. Hamilton, in seconding Mr. Disraeli's motion, very judiciously said, that he would confine himself strictly to the subject, and scrupulously avoid all personalities. Sir Robert Peel spoke on the question. Mr. Disraeli had wished the House at once to declare that the consular and diplomatic establishments should be united. Such a question must be decided by experience. Authority on such a question, was of much importance. Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson, when this subject was brought before them, had come to an opposite conclusion to Mr. Disraeli. A committee, composed of very eminent men, some years later, expressed in their

report an opinion, that such an union was inexpedient. Authority was, therefore, against Mr. Disraeli's motion. Sir Robert openly announced that he would never interfere on political grounds with any consular appointment; and he also declared that there was a great disposition in those who were disqualified for any public offices to expect such situations.

At length, Lord Palmerston rose. Mr. Disraeli's motion, said the noble lord, with his usual keenness and readiness, was ostensibly aimed at a change in public establishments, but was really an attack on the course taken by him when he held the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He agreed with Sir Robert Peel that Mr. Disraeli had laid down no grounds whatever for adopting such a proposition. He had never heard a speech so little supported by assertion, far less by proof, as that which the member for Shrewsbury had delivered. The honourable gentleman had told the House, that for a length of time his mind had been steadily fixed upon Gazette after Gazette, and that his whole attention had been directed to the appointment of consuls. The information to be derived from newspapers might be very extensive, but the study of Gazettes could not be equally profitable for enlarging the mind and improving

the understanding. If the honourable gentleman, instead of having so sedulously watched the appointments of consuls as they appeared in the Gazette, had taken the trouble of collecting proper materials for throwing a light upon the subject, and had studied the writers on the law of nations, he might possibly, with the talent and ingenuity he possessed, have furnished himself with better grounds for arriving at a full understanding of the subject. But in fact, the proposition was merely made in order to enable the honourable gentleman to enter upon a detailed criticism of Lord Palmerston's appointments. It was quite true, as Sir Robert Peel had said, that every man thought himself capable of being a good consul. But Mr. Disraeli's proposition only showed how little he understood the elementary principles of the duties of consuls. The duties of a consul differed in every respect from the duties of a diplomatist. A consul had to look after the vessels coming into the port where he resided. He had to settle the disputes between the masters of ships and their crew, and to listen to the complaints of British subjects against the local authorities. He was also charged by law with the duty of relieving distressed Englishmen, and of making advances to enable them to return home. These were not

by their nature diplomatic duties. To diplomacy belonged the intercourse between nation and nation, and between the government of one country and the government of another. Consular duties related to the intercourse between the subjects of one country and the subjects of another. The two duties were essentially distinct, though it might occasionally happen that a diplomatist performed the duty of a consul, or a consul that of a diplomatist, when unexpected circumstances occurred. But it was not, after all, Mr. Disraeli's real object that his motion should be carried. It was simply a personal attack. After going into a long detail, and showing in almost every instance how ill-informed or unfair Mr. Disraeli was in his statement of facts, Lord Palmerston cleverly observed, that though the honourable gentleman had affirmed the general principle that political adherents ought to be rewarded by appointments, it was to be regretted that Mr. Disraeli should in his own person be an exception to his own rule. Lord Palmerston trusted that after the proofs of talent and ability the honourable member for Shrewsbury had exhibited, the government would overlook his want of industry in getting up the details of the case, and that before the session terminated, the House might see Mr. Disraeli's

maxim applied to his own case. Lord Palmerston defended the appointment of his relation, whom he had conscientiously selected, because he was fully capable of performing satisfactorily his responsible duties. Anything personal to Lord Palmerston, Mr. Disraeli was quite entitled to urge with any degree of antithesis, epigram, or force, that he might think proper. Though no longer a minister of the crown, Lord Palmerston was fully responsible for what he had done when in office. But he thought that it was not very generous, and not very becoming in any gentleman, merely for the purpose of attacking a political opponent, to draw into the discussion men who had no connexion with the party conflicts within the walls of the House of Commons, who were most sensitive about their characters, and whose influence in supporting the interests of their country in foreign lands depended very much upon the estimation in which they appeared to be held at home. This was wantonly wounding the feelings of persons whom a political partisan could have no motive for attacking. "Therefore," said Lord Palmerston, in conclusion, "I would say to the honourable member, that in future I beg he will turn his steel upon me. Here am I who did it. Let him attack me as much as he pleases. But let him permit me to

entreat, on the part of those who are serving the public in official stations abroad, that he will be as sparing as possible of their feelings; and that, if in any case he should feel it his duty to embark in a crusade against any of them, he will at least take pains to be quite sure that the information upon which he founds his charge is thoroughly correct, before he says that, which going forth to the world, must inflict pain on those who deserved no censure, and must hazard a material injury to their efficiency as servants of the public."

Mr. Disraeli in reply, left entirely unnoticed Lord Palmerson's very serious charges of incorrectness in facts. Yet it was on these facts that the motion had been founded. Mr. Disraeli, however, did not pass without comment the hopes that Lord Palmerston had expressed for his political promotion. Six years before this time, 'Runnymede' said in his epistle to Lord Palmerston, "You have, my lord, served seven prime ministers with equal fidelity;" and all that Mr. Disraeli could say in answer to Lord Palmerston's powerful and conclusive speech was this old taunt of Disraeli the Younger in his anonymous character. "The noble Viscount," he said, "is a consummate master of the subject of political promotion, and if the noble Viscount

will only impart to me the secret by which he has himself contrived to retain office during seven successive administrations, the present debate will certainly not be without a result."

That was all the result which could have been obtained from such a motion. Mr. Disraeli did not venture on a division. They who are determined to admire everything Mr. Disraeli has done since he became a distinguished public man, will of course suppose that Sir Robert Peel and Lord Palmerston only proved themselves red-tapists by thus opposing his proposition; but no candid person who will fairly read the speeches of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Palmerston will be of that opinion. Lord Palmerston showed most clearly that Mr. Disraeli had committed egregious mistakes; and it did not even require Sir Robert Peel's great parliamentary experience to point out the impracticable nature of the motion. It was an abstract resolution, and the House of Commons has always shown a salutary dislike to abstract resolutions. It was an abstract resolution applied to circumstances the most opposite in every part of the world. It was an abstract resolution founded on some clever personalities. It is not, therefore, astonishing that Mr. Disraeli did not divide the House. True it is that there are great abuses in the con-

sular establishments; but such abuses are not to be remedied by taunts and epigrams, or by abstract resolutions. Mr. Disraeli did not, therefore, gain much honour by his first elaborate display.

His hatred of Lord Palmerston from this time became more furious than ever. It broke out on every subject. The disastrous war in Affghanistan, and all the commercial embarrassments of the day, were all attributed to Lord Palmerston's foreign policy. To such an extent did Mr. Disraeli carry his hostility to the late Foreign Secretary, and so perpetually was he dwelling on that ex-minister's misdeeds, that Lord Palmerston on one occasion retorted that Mr. Disraeli had only one idea. It appeared at this time that Lord Palmerston had produced all the evils under the sun. Even in discussions on the Corn Laws and the agricultural system, Mr. Disraeli ingeniously discovered that it was Lord Palmerston's policy which had produced all the evil.

This crusade against Lord Palmerston gave rise to one of the most ludicrous inconsistencies which any public man ever committed. As has been shown, when the Whig Ministry was in power, and before the disagreement with France on the Syrian question had produced the diplo-

matic rupture between the two nations, Mr. Disraeli had accused Lord Palmerston of sacrificing English interests to those of his continental neighbour, and had spoken with disdain of the projected French commercial treaty. Because that treaty had not been ratified, Lord Palmerston was now accused of having created all the depression of trade; and Mr. Disraeli said that had the French markets been opened to British manufactures, the distress would have been relieved. Lord Palmerston had therefore sacrificed commercial to political interests. His diplomacy was an anti-commercial diplomacy. His mismanagement, and not the Corn Laws, nor the agricultural system, had disarranged our commercial transactions.

On Sir Robert Peel introducing his famous tariff of 1842, Mr. Disraeli supported it on profound philosophical principles. When Lord Palmerston laid his French commercial treaty on the table of the House of Commons, the sound Tory principles of policy were to maintain the Austrian alliance; for the commercial and political interests of Austria and England were inseparably associated, and no two nations could be so fitted for a firm and lasting union. Now, however, Sir Robert Peel's free-trade measures were enthusiastically supported by

Mr. Disraeli, because Mr. Pitt and Lord Shelburne had always been eminent free-traders; because their Tory policy, in opposition to that of Burke and Fox, was a close alliance with France; and because the cardinal point of the enlightened Tory system was Mr. Pitt's French commercial treaty.

On the 10th of May, in the discussion of the minister's commercial reforms, Mr. Labouchere said, that whatever might be their merits, they were inconsistent with those principles of Protection which Sir Robert Peel had professed in opposition, and by which he had come into office. Mr. Disraeli defended the prime minister. Sir Robert Peel had not, he said, adopted in office principles which he had repudiated in opposition. The liberal party were not the originators of the principles of free trade; which were not of such recent invention as had been supposed. Mr. Pitt first promulgated them in 1787. After the loss of the great colonial market of America, Mr. Pitt said that we must begin to look around for new markets on the continent of America, and carry on our commerce on a system of complete reciprocity. He affirmed that we must lower our duties and consolidate our customs. The Whigs, however, opposed Mr. Pitt. Lord Shelburne came forth from his retirement, and refuted

Bishop Watson. The principles of free trade were developed fifty years ago, but not by the Whigs. The administration of Lord Liverpool was in advance of its generation. Mr. Huskisson only prosecuted the system of Mr. Wallace and Mr. Robinson. Sir Robert Peel was, therefore, in his free-trade measures, only carrying Mr. Pitt's principles into effect. Thus, Mr. Disraeli said, he had refuted the accusations against the prime minister, whose ideas were in exact harmony, in perfect consistency, with the principles laid down by Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Disraeli more than once repeated, before adopting in 1846 regular protectionist prejudices, that the Tory party was the originator of these free trade principles, and that the Whigs were the advocates of commercial restrictions. Such bold assertions have a mighty effect on weak minds, which are convinced by phrases. It may be as well to look at facts. All men will allow that Adam Smith was the great exponent of free trade, and that he first systematically propounded these liberal principles in his immortal work on the Wealth of Nations. This great production of human wisdom was first published in 1776. Now Adam Smith was at least as good a judge as Mr. Disraeli can be, of what free-trade principles really meant, and Adam Smith declared that long

before the 'Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations' was published, Edmund Burke held the same opinions, and was the only man who had really formed them independently of him, and before ever having the least communication with him on this great subject. We have only to read Burke's 'Observations on the present state of the Nation,' his 'Speeches on the American War,' and his 'Two Letters to Gentlemen in Bristol,' to see clearly that while the second William Pitt was in petticoats, the principles of free trade had been advocated in the senate, and through the press, by this great champion of civil and religious freedom.

No expressions of Mr. Pitt can be shown so clearly in favour of free trade as Mr. Burke invariably used. One of the reasons of his defeat at the Bristol election, was that he advocated free trade, not with a foreign nation, but with Ireland.

Mr. Burke opposed Mr. Pitt's treaty of commerce with France in 1787, on solid and statesmanlike grounds. We had not then been at peace with France for thirty years. Our colonies had just won their independence by the aid of France. Ireland was in a most dangerous state, and France was even granting more liberal commercial terms to Ireland, than England could

be prevailed upon to do; though Ireland was an integral portion of the British empire. Portugal, too, had been ever since the days of old Froissart the ally of England. Yet Ireland and Portugal were thought of no account by the minister who was thus concluding the liberal treaty with France. "Ireland," said Mr. Burke, "is called infatuated Ireland; the Portuguese alliance is said to be unnatural and worthless; we cling to France as we separate from ourselves." Is it that Mr. Burke declared himself against commercial freedom? Quite the contrary. He opposed the treaty on political grounds. He said that he had no jealousy of our manufactures being given up to France, but that he could not believe in those pacific professions of our neighbours, when he remembered that they were just as ready with these professions before they took part in the American war, and saw that even at this very time they were raising fortifications at Cherbourg. And whether was Mr. Pitt or Mr. Burke in the right? At no distant day Mr. Pitt himself plunged into a war against France, and this tremendous struggle continued for a quarter of a century.

If facts were represented as they really are, it would appear that Lord Shelburne, so far from being the great advocate of the French commercial treaty, made most serious objections to many

of its propositions, and really agreed in almost every respect, not with Mr. Pitt, but with Mr. Burke. This is only another instance of the one-sided manner in which Mr. Disraeli ever relates historical facts. He speaks of this treaty as belonging to Mr. Pitt and Lord Shelburne; these two names are by him always coupled together; they are always mentioned as though they were Tory statesmen, and their principles as eminently Tory principles. Now it is very remarkable that Lord Shelburne was not a Tory. If he belonged to any party, he was a Whig; but he was a determined follower of Lord Chatham, and, like his great leader, professed to have nothing to do with any party connections. And here, perhaps, it may not be too inquisitive to ask why Mr. Disraeli, when speaking of this statesman in 1787, does not give him his proper title of Marquis of Lansdowne? Is it because the name of Lansdowne is so essentially Whiggish? A Tory Lord Shelburne never was. Of one of his speeches, Mr. Disraeli has made even very lately a somewhat unscrupulous use, as will in due time be indicated. In another oration on the same question, he might have learnt, that in his old age Lord Shelburne avowed that he was neither of the party of Pitt nor Fox, neither Whig nor Tory; that "his political creed, and his guide and prin-

'ciple it had ever been throughout his life to embrace every measure on its own ground, and to be free from all connexion." Why did Lord Shelburne say this in 1787? Because the Duke of Richmond, the leader of Mr. Pitt's government in the House of Lords, had been so dissatisfied with the qualified approbation Lord Shelburne had expressed of this commercial treaty, and had made so many objections to it, that he accused the veteran statesman of wishing to please both parties, and of speaking on both sides of the question. And yet it is this very Lord Shelburne whom Mr. Disraeli connects with Mr. Pitt, and that very commercial treaty which he represents as their joint work.

So far was Mr. Disraeli's Lord Shelburne from approving of all the provisions of the treaty, that his objections are, as has been said, much the same as Mr. Burke's, and he even uses, in commenting on its omissions, the very same language. He, like Mr. Burke, expressed his astonishment that by the arrangement Ireland was left more connected with France than with England, that no steps had been taken to prevent the erection of the works at Cherbourg, that no political advantages had been gained on the part of England for the commercial sacrifices she had made to France, and that a favourable opportunity had

been lost for settling with advantage to this country many important questions. Mr. Burke, indeed, thought that France was our national enemy, and Lord Shelburne believed that France had been our national friend; but on the subject of the treaty, on its serious omissions and shortcomings, both Mr. Burke and Lord Shelburne were agreed. It is not therefore true, it is the very reverse of truth, to say that Mr. Pitt and Lord Shelburne, by the commercial treaty with France, proved themselves and the Tory party to be the originators of free trade. And as for Bishop Watson, when Mr. Disraeli triumphs over him for declaring that peace ought not to depend on the selfish prospects of commercial policy, he blames the right reverend prelate for saying what the present Tory member for Buckinghamshire has himself said over and over again; and thus witnesses in his own person to the truth of another observation of the same bishop, that the manufacturing and commercial systems were praised or blamed by politicians, just as it suited their immediate purpose.

But though Mr. Disraeli fails in proving that the Tories were free-traders in 1787, his attempt to do so proves that he was himself a free-trader in 1843. He found it convenient in 1846, to drop altogether the name of free-trader, that he

might assume the leadership of the Protectionist party. But in the session of 1842, and the earlier part of the session of 1843, he was a decided free-trader, and defended the Corn Laws as an exception to the general principles of free trade. Thus, on the 14th of February, 1843, on Lord Howick's motion for a committee on the distress of the country, Mr. Disraeli was again philosophical and historical, and the advocate of free commercial intercourse. He said, that the plenipotentiaries who settled Europe at the Congress of Vienna, had, in a certain degree, been the remote cause of the commercial depression; but that the prime agent of this misery was Lord Palmerston. From 1820 to 1830, had been a happy period of enlightened progress; but this progress had been blighted by Lord Palmerston and the Reform Bill. Mr. Disraeli then significantly reminded Sir Robert Peel that he was one of the admirers of Mr. Huskisson, and the Conservative minister was thus virtually invited by his ardent supporter to proceed in the same course. The member for Shrewsbury concluded by distinctly declaring that he was not prepared to stand or fall by the details of the Corn Law; that he would, with respect to that law, reserve to himself, as Sir Robert Peel had assured them he would do, the most unbounded licence.

No language can be stronger. The word "protection" is never mentioned. The Corn Laws are only defended as an exception to the general principles of free trade; and even regarding the Corn Laws, Mr. Disraeli, echoing the words of the leader whom he is proud to follow, reserves to himself the most unbounded licence. On the 25th of April he even went further, and gave a definition of free trade. There was obviously, Mr. Disraeli said, an analogy between civil and religious freedom. A man was not less free because he was subjected to some regulations; and free trade was not less free because there might be some restrictions. No words could be plainer than those of the member for Shrewsbury; he clearly considered himself an eminent free-trader; and, most certainly, never called himself at this time, nor until nearly two years later, a Protectionist. His constituents had grumbled at him for supporting Sir Robert Peel's tariff reform in 1842; they believed that it was contrary to Tory principles, thus to unfetter the commerce of the country. Mr. Disraeli went down to his friends in Shrewsbury, the oldest Tory constituency in the kingdom, as he informed the House of Commons in the following year; explained the history of England to them, and made them all free-traders. Mr.

Disraeli assured honourable members that he had already succeeded in weeding from the minds of his constituents some most inveterate Whig prejudices; and that after he had taken the trouble of teaching them history, "they took the most enlightened views on the subject, and were proud to recur to the old Tory principles of commerce."

The philippics against Lord Palmerston contained genuine free-trade principles. He attacked his policy in Affghanistan; and in the debate on the Treaty of Washington, in another most elaborate address, declaimed against the late Foreign Secretary, and defended, at great length, Sir Robert Peel and the administration.

During the greater part of the session of 1843, Mr. Disraeli clearly proceeded in the course he had commenced when the Conservative ministers came into office. His object evidently was to conciliate them, and to assail their most formidable opponent, Lord Palmerston, whose powers were frequently exerted with masterly effect against the policy of the new government. Up to this time—that is, for the two years in which Sir Robert Peel had held office—not a whisper had Mr. Disraeli breathed against the men or the measures of the cabinet. Suddenly, however, on the 9th of August, of the year 1843, he

entirely changed his tactics, without any previous notice, and was found directing a masked battery against the minister whom he had hitherto so cordially supported, and in defence of whose policy he had so frequently spoken. Mr. Disraeli, it appeared, entirely disapproved of the Irish policy of Sir Robert Peel. The two measures, Mr. Disraeli said, on which the administration had been formed, were the Irish Registration Bill and the Irish Municipal Bill. Both these measures had been abandoned. Sir Robert Peel, in selecting for office an Irish Secretary like Lord Eliot, had virtually given up the Irish policy on which he acceded to power. The minister had admitted that his course was diametrically wrong, and that his opponents were in the right. Mr. Disraeli did not hesitate to draw the inference that the followers of the government were left to themselves, and were free from any bonds of party. He had himself only supported the Irish Registration Bill as a party measure, but parties ought to have distinct principles.

After thus attacking, for the first time, the minister whom he had so frequently praised, Mr. Disraeli now, in the same speech, began to praise the Whigs, whom he had always so vehemently abused. The Whigs had distinct prin-

ciples; and Lord John Russell, who was complimented as their leader, had given a pedigree of patriotism. These Whig measures, Mr. Disraeli admitted, were great measures, and which none but great men, so numerous in the political history of the country, could have framed.

He bewailed the fate of gentlemen who were sitting on the ministerial benches. The Tory party was now left in the lurch; their leader had thrown up the reins; he had told them he had made a mistake, and could give them no further advice. Mr. Disraeli then, according to his custom, became profoundly philosophical on the original principles of Toryism, which, singularly enough, he always finds to be what he wishes them. Hostility to the Irish people, continued the member for Shrewsbury, was not a distinct ingredient of Tory policy. When the Tory party was led by Lord Bolingbroke, "an attainted and exiled leader," the Roman Catholics were found in the ranks of the Tories. At a time like this, when they were sinking into a faction, degenerating into the lowest position in which public men could be placed, supporting a ministry without knowing why, it was necessary to recur to principles. There was dissension in the cabinet; and a result of the most lamentable nature only

could spring from such dissensions. The condition of Ireland required immediate measures; the government must be reorganised; the social state must be reconstructed.

This was the tenor of Mr. Disraeli's extraordinary speech. This was the first symptom of disaffection he had given to Sir Robert Peel, and from this memorable night dates an entire change in Mr. Disraeli's manœuvres. In all times, and under all circumstances, from this moment, he is seen invariably attacking the Conservative prime minister. The speech itself, in which this hostility is first indicated, does not afford any explanation of the motives for such a course of action. It is even contradictory and unintelligible. Was there any public transaction in the month of June or of July, 1843, of so remarkable a nature as to induce an ardent supporter of the ministry to become one of their determined opponents? It is evident that, though Sir Robert Peel may not have acted on the same principles in office and in opposition, his policy throughout the session of 1843, was straightforward and consistent with itself. But Mr. Disraeli did not allege that there had been any political occurrence during the session, to justify him in thus going abruptly into opposition. His speech was made on the third reading of the Arms Bill; but

after this measure was first introduced, he had warmly supported the government. The third reading of a bill of that nature, was certainly not the time to oppose it for the first time on principle. The objection that the appointment of Lord Eliot as Chief Secretary for Ireland was a virtual abandonment of the Irish policy which Sir Robert Peel had professed in opposition, was even still more ill-timed; for Lord Eliot's appointment took place in the first week of September, 1841; Mr. Disraeli had never noticed it until this 9th of August, 1843, and he had been, during the interval, a regular supporter of the government, and a frequent speaker in the House of Commons. His instance of Lord Eliot, in fact, only makes his first attack on Sir Robert Peel still more incomprehensible; for, if the minister's former policy had been, as his opponent urged, virtually abandoned from the very moment when the administration was formed, how could an habitual occupant of the Tory benches accuse him of apostacy only in the August of 1843? But Mr. Disraeli's other reasons for this sudden change from friendship to hostility are even more unintelligible. The government had been formed, he said, on two great measures, the Irish Registration Bill, and

the Irish Municipal Bill; and since they had been given up, the bonds of party were broken. But Mr. Disraeli actually opposed Lord Stanley's Municipal Bill in 1839, though it was quite harmless, and, as a compromise, was supported even by the Whig government; and in this very speech he declared that he supported the Irish Registration Bill only as a party measure. How could he then, with any propriety affirm, that a measure which he opposed, and another, which he only as a stern adherent of a party, voted for, were the two measures on which the government he had supported for two years was formed; and that because these two measures had not been again introduced, the allegiance of the party was at an end? If these bills had been the very foundation of the policy of the government, Mr. Disraeli ought not to have complained because they were not brought forward; for he, who had opposed one of them, and now, as he said, only supported the other as a party measure, ought to have rejoiced that they had not been introduced again with the sanction of the ministers, and for this reason alone ought especially to have become more earnest, if possible, in his support of the administration. However guilty Sir Robert might have

been towards those who on principle voted for the two bills, towards Mr. Disraeli he was at all events innocent.

But what was this Irish Registration Bill which Mr. Disraeli, obeying, as he said, the stern requirements of his party, did support; which he now upbraided Sir Robert Peel for not bringing forward, and on this plea renounced all party attachment to the minister? It was a daring measure for disfranchising the Irish Roman Catholics by thousands and tens of thousands. This, even Lord Stanley, after he had changed sides in the House of Commons, was compelled to admit, and its abandonment was a silent condemnation of the scheme. Yet, because it was not again laid on the table, Mr. Disraeli declares himself free from all the bonds of party to the ministers, and then in the same speech attempts to show that hostility to the Roman Catholics was not an ingredient of genuine Tory policy! Was there ever a speech delivered so full of inconsistencies? Was there ever any explanation so utterly inexplicable?

Ministers had been guilty of treason to the Tory party because they had not introduced these two bills, one of which Mr. Disraeli had voted against, and the other was framed for the very purpose of disfranchising the Roman Catholics;

but in the same address, when flinging his allegiance in the face of the Tory administration because such a violent measure as the Irish Registration Bill had not been introduced, and because two years before, an Irish Secretary of moderate opinions had been chosen, Mr. Disraeli was still of opinion that sound Tory policy had ever been to conciliate the Roman Catholics.

The more such illogical statements are considered, the more preposterous they appear. It is clear that, to account for Mr. Disraeli's rapid change of opinion, some other reason than that which he has himself given must be found. Every one was startled when the first note of defiance was sounded by the member for Shrewsbury, and many curious reports, which are not worth repeating, were in circulation. Hints in the lobbies of the House of Commons are not always to be trusted, or else it would have to be received as an undoubted fact, that Mr. Disraeli had had his direct application for place in 1843 entirely disregarded. But it is probable that no direct application was made. Now, was there any other occurrence, however slight, in the course of the session, which might in some measure elucidate this remarkable transaction? There was.

The affairs of Servia, perhaps, had some influence on the political fate of Mr. Disraeli. In the

month of October, 1842, an insurrection had broken out in that province; one governor had been deposed, and another elected in his place. The Emperor of Russia, ever ready to interfere in the affairs of Turkey, pretended that the Treaty of Adrianople had been violated in the recent election. Serious differences had arisen on the subject between Russia and the Porte. On the 24th of April, 1843, Mr. Disraeli, who had been highly distinguishing himself by his speeches on foreign policy, asked Sir Robert Peel a question about the Servian dispute; but Sir Robert Peel only communicated the simple facts. Four days afterwards, Mr. Disraeli again stepped forward to ask more questions, entered into a detail of circumstances, and hoped the right honourable baronet would not desert an old and oppressed ally. Sir Robert Peel replied rather sharply, that it was inconsistent with his duty to answer the honourable member's question. He was required to take assumption for unquestioned truths. He declined entering upon the subject now; the negotiation was still pending; when it was terminated, but not earlier, it might be discussed.

When Mr. Disraeli asked his question, it is probable that he had not the least intention of coming into collision with the minister. It is not at all unlikely that he might suppose he was

doing him very acceptable service. It appeared that the consul of Silurin had been wrong in his information, and had misled the government. Now this consul was one of those whom Mr. Disraeli accused Lord Palmerston of having improperly appointed. When Mr. Disraeli applied to Sir Robert Peel, it might have been with the intention of continuing the warfare against Lord Palmerston; and he might expect that the prime minister would readily give any information, and assist in the intended attack on the Whig Foreign Secretary. Full, too, of the honours he might suppose himself to have gained in these repeated blows at the noble lord, Mr. Disraeli might conclude that he had made a very favourable impression on the minister, and would soon taste the sweets of office. But Sir Robert Peel's manner was not to be mistaken. His words were few; but they were very significant. It was plain that all Mr. Disraeli's exertions in the war against Lord Palmerston had been of no account. It was plain that all those brilliant speeches had not made his expectations of promotion any better. Sir Robert Peel evidently disliked the honourable member for Shrewsbury. From that quarter Mr. Disraeli now became convinced he had nothing more to hope. He saw, with as-

tonishment and horror, that the pertinacious labours of two years had been of no avail: that all his epigrammatic satires against Lord Palmerston had been thrown away. With characteristic promptitude he therefore turned round and became the resolute personal assailant of Sir Robert Peel.

The third reading of the Arms Bill was Mr. Disraeli's first opportunity. But the week after his extraordinary speech on Ireland, Lord Palmerston made a motion for the production of papers relating to the Servian dispute. Mr. Disraeli supported Lord Palmerston, rose immediately after Sir Robert Peel, and attacked the government. Lord Palmerston was now praised by Mr. Disraeli, and Sir Robert Peel became the object of his invective. "The authority of a Servian consul, and the necessity of acting with Austria, forms," said the patriotic member for Shrewsbury, "the only answer that the right honourable baronet has made to the comprehensive speech of the noble lord." So bitter was Mr. Disraeli's language, that as soon as he had concluded Lord Sandon complained of the unmeasured hostility of one who had usually been a supporter of the administration. Mr. Hume, with his usual unsuspecting credulity, which leads him to bring out the least

indications of liberalism, was again fated to be deceived by Mr. Disraeli. The venerable member, little knowing what this opposition to Sir Robert Peel meant, as he formerly as little knew what the same gentleman's hostility to the Whigs meant, said that Mr. Disraeli did not deserve Lord Sandon's rebuke, that he was glad to see such an instance of independence, and hoped that other young members would profit by the example.

And thus Mr. Disraeli flung down the gauntlet at the feet of the minister whom he had been so long "proud to follow." Whether the explanation here given of such a rapid change be correct or not, it is certain that Mr. Disraeli was offended by the studied coldness of Sir Robert Peel. "I was treated," he said ironically, "with that courtesy which the right honourable baronet reserves for his supporters." But a supporter of Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Disraeli remained no longer; for even in the biography of Bentinck, he speaks of himself at the commencement of the year 1846, as "a member, who, though on the Tory benches, had been for two sessions in opposition to the ministry." Thus, whatever might be the cause of his opposition to Sir Robert, the time of its commencement as fixed by himself, agrees with that here stated.

He would not have been permitted to assail the minister in 1844, with the same bitter personality which he directed against him when the party was breaking up. Mr. Disraeli dexterously adapted his language to the feelings of the audience. He commenced with quietly quizzing Sir Robert, and by degrees went to the utmost limits of virulence and invective.

Conscious that his speech on Ireland, in the August of 1843, was not satisfactory, as soon as parliament met in 1844, on Lord Howick's motion for a committee on the State of Ireland, Mr. Disraeli resumed the subject just as he had left it at the end of the last session, and made an elaborate defence of what had been called his new-born zeal for Ireland. Puritanism, and not Protestantism, he said, had been the cause of the misery of Ireland. The Tory party had not fostered the system of exclusion; it had not invented the penal code. The Tories were the natural allies of the Irish people. He had always acknowledged that he was a party man. It was the duty of a member of the House of Commons to be a party man. He, however, would only follow a leader who was prepared to lead. He did not agree with Sir Robert Peel that Ireland was the great difficulty of the administration; a minister of great ability and

of great power, when at the head of a large majority, would settle that question. His new-born zeal for Ireland was not new. He was quite consistent. The only time he had given his opinion how the government of Ireland should be conducted, was in the debate on the Municipal Corporations, and on that occasion he divided against Sir Robert Peel. He had not changed his opinions. His principles were Tory principles, "the natural principles of the democracy of England;" but "not the Tory principles of those whose fathers had bled under Charles the First, and who now would support in Ireland the tyranny of Oliver Cromwell:"—"not the Tory principles of those who would associate Toryism with restricted commerce, and a continual assault on the liberty of the subject." Whig principles were the natural principles of the aristocracy of the country. He could not vote for Lord Howick's resolution, because the noble lord did not offer more than Her Majesty's ministers. He wanted a public man to come forward and say what the Irish question was. Then he gave his ideas of the Irish question; and it would have seemed from his words that he was not only the leader of Young England, but also of Young Ireland; for Mr. Smith O'Brien could not have used

stronger language. "Ireland," said Mr. Disraeli, "is a country in great distress; it has an established Church that is not the Church of the people, and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom live in distant capitals. Ireland has a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, an alien Church, and the weakest executive in the world." The duty of an Englishman, he concluded, was therefore to effect by policy what a revolution would effect by force; the moment Ireland had a strong executive, a just administration, and *ecclesiastical equality*, we should have order, and the physical and moral condition of the people would improve.

In dating the misery of Ireland from the time of Cromwell, Mr. Disraeli entirely forgets the Irish rebellion of 1641, and the iron tyranny of Strafford, by which that rebellion was provoked. He entirely forgets that Cromwell went to Ireland to execute vengeance on those who had so cruelly slaughtered his countrymen. He entirely forgets that even during the reign of Elizabeth there were terrible massacres and much misery, as Spenser's 'View of the State of Ireland,' and this poet's personal history, so clearly illustrate. Burke understood the history and the condition of Ireland, if ever statesman did. Every remedial measure which has

been adopted for the last hundred years has been owing to his suggestions; and well would it have been, both for England and Ireland, had Mr. Pitt had the courage to follow out more earnestly and consistently the course of Irish policy which Burke recommended, and which the minister partly pursued. But Burke took a most comprehensive view of the affairs of mankind. He was far above all that pettiness of regarding history and political events as materials for personalities and abuse. So far from attributing the miseries of Ireland to Puritanism, or even to Protestantism, he looked farther back, and declared that "the spirit of the Popery laws, and some even of their actual provisions, as applied between Englishry and Irishry, existed in that harassed country before the words Protestant and Papist were heard of in the world." So far from attributing the evils of Ireland to absenteeism, those who are the least acquainted with his writings must know that he has fully refuted this hackneyed argument, and shown that it was impossible to pass a law obliging landlords to reside on their estates, without turning the great British empire into a series of small states. Mr. Disraeli at least thinks it of some importance to maintain the integrity of the empire; for he supported in 1839 the Irish Registration Bill, that measure of whole-

sale disfranchisement, in a speech of much violence; rose immediately after Mr. Sheil; asked "on a question requiring deliberation were they to be met with a tone of menace from one engorged with the plunder of a cheated country?"; and after thus grossly insulting Mr. Sheil and panegyrising Lord Stanley, finished his speech by asserting that all who voted against that bill voted for the dismemberment of the empire. Not one word about the Tories being the natural allies of Ireland is to be found in that speech, nor even in that to which he alluded as having been delivered on the Municipal Corporations Bill. There could be no merit in voting against that measure, because it was a very moderate one, and supported by all parties; and in the speech of Mr. Disraeli on that occasion, there is not one sentence about the necessity of conciliating the Irish Roman Catholics. It is merely an attack upon O'Connell. All the artful special pleading imaginable cannot prove that the member for Shrewsbury opposed the Irish policy of Sir Robert Peel, until he began regularly to attack the administration and the minister in the August of 1843.

Then he raised the cry of "justice to Ireland;" for Sir Robert Peel had always acknowledged that Ireland was his great difficulty; and Mr. Disraeli

very considerately endeavoured to make it still greater. During the greater part of the session of 1844 he was very quiet. There was no hope of immediate success. It was necessary to watch events, and strike only when the blow could be effectively dealt. Whenever he did address the House at this time, it was always to attack the prime minister in a gently malicious spirit. In a discussion on Mr. Ferrand's personalities, Mr. Disraeli alluded to Sir Robert Walpole as "not so great a man as 'our Sir Robert,' but still a most distinguished one;" and spoke of Lord Stanley as the Prince Rupert of parliamentary debate, whose charge was always resistless, but who always, on returning from pursuit, found his camp in the possession of the enemy.

In the June of this year, an amendment on the subject of the Sugar Duties was carried against the ministry. Sir Robert Peel moved, under the threat of resignation, that the vote should be rescinded. Mr. Disraeli eagerly seized the opportunity, and made a fiery onslaught. He said Sir Robert Peel's horror of slavery extended everywhere but to his own benches. There the gang was still assembled. There the whip still sounded. Twice during one month had the minister degraded the representatives of the people, by compelling them to rescind their votes.

Sir Robert menaced his friends, and cringed to his opponents.

The position of the Conservative minister became more critical in 1845, because his policy became more liberal. Mr. Disraeli, it must be remembered, had called out for a liberal policy regarding Ireland, and regarding our commercial system; he had affirmed that the Tories were really the friends of Ireland, and the original and most consistent free-traders. Only during the last session, while opposing the ministers, he had demanded remedial measures, and would not support Lord Howick's motion, because he did not offer more than the ministers. Remedial measures Sir Robert Peel was now about to bring forward; and he was about to free the commerce of the country from restrictions. Mr. Disraeli had distinctly said that his Toryism was not the Toryism of the Orange Society, and not the Toryism of those who would associate Toryism with restricted commerce. How then might it naturally be expected that a man with such principles would receive the minister's increased Maynooth grant, and further extension of the principles of free trade? If words meant anything, if any confidence could be placed in professions, if all these authoritative expositions of the original principles of Toryism could afford any motive

for human action, might not Mr. Disraeli be expected to welcome the enlightened policy which was now for ever to be established as that of all sound statesmanship?

The Post Office abuse was, in more senses than one, an open question; and therefore it is no reproach to Mr. Disraeli that on this subject he opposed the ministers. On February the 20th he seconded Lord Howick's motion for a select committee, and had he confined himself to the caricature of the prime minister thumping his red box, and frightening young members, his condemnation of that inquisitorial system would have been meritorious. But even when Mr. Disraeli has a good cause, he frequently manages to injure it by his personalities; and on this evening he could not forbear terrifying honourable gentlemen by informing them that one of the members of the government had been engaged in Despard's plot. Sir Robert Peel replied to Mr. Disraeli's attack, asked him to be a manly foe, and not to strike blows at the right flank; and the next evening the minister proved that the individual whom Mr. Disraeli had accused of being concerned in Despard's plot, had nothing more to do with that diabolical conspiracy of 1802 than with the Gunpowder Plot in the time of James the First. Mr. Disraeli was obliged to apolo-

gize for his error. He confessed that it was entirely a mistake; but Sir Robert Peel had ironically cheered him while speaking, and he owned he could not forbear yielding to the impulse of the moment, and saying something that he knew would be disagreeable.

But though he was thus obliged to apologize, a very few evenings afterwards he assailed the minister with more acrimony than he had hitherto ventured to exhibit. Sir Robert Peel, he said, had caught the Whigs bathing, and had walked away with their clothes; tamed the shrew of liberalism by her own tactics; and was the political Petruchio who had outbid them all. Smarting under Sir Robert's recent castigations, Mr. Disraeli advised the prime minister, instead of reproving his disobedient supporters, to stick to quotation: he would find that a much safer weapon; because he never quoted any passage which had not obtained the meed of parliamentary approbation; and as his quotations were always happy, they were sure to be successful. Mr. Disraeli concluded with a taunting sentence about Mr. Canning.

He was thus gradually becoming sharper and more inveterate in his sarcastic assaults. All that he now required for entering the arena in the true gladiatorial style was, that the Tory

party should really be thoroughly at variance with their able but moderate leader. He had so far received no encouragement from the country gentlemen on the ministerial benches. His opposition was by them fully attributed to personal motives, and the principles he avowed were opposed to all their ideas of Toryism. But as Sir Robert Peel adopted those principles of Irish policy and commercial freedom which the member for Shrewsbury had so frequently declared to be the great principles of the Tory party, Mr. Disraeli began to be more guarded in his expressions, and at length adapted his language to the prejudices of the landed gentry. Then, and not till then, did his voice swell their cry in favour of "protection to native industry."

Whether Sir Robert were consistent or inconsistent, he was then sure to be attacked with the same envenomed satire. During the session there was a motion made to the effect, that in the application of the surplus revenue, the necessities of the agriculturists should be remembered. At this time the Corn Laws were in full force. A motion of the same kind had been made in 1836, when Sir Robert Peel was the leader of the opposition; but on that occasion he had broken away from his party, and voted against this motion of the Tory country gentlemen. It

could therefore scarcely be expected that he would support the same proposition when he had the responsibilities of office on his shoulders; nor could that be a fitting opportunity to accuse him of treachery. But this was not what Mr. Disraeli considered. He saw that the Protectionists grumbled at the minister for not granting their unprecedented demand, which was to transfer 280,000*l.* from the consolidated fund, to that vague generality, the agricultural interest; and which, certainly, as the minister clearly showed, while inflicting a direct loss on the country, could give no material relief to any individuals. Mr. Disraeli, in a very determined spirit, assailed the minister for not granting in office what he had voted against in opposition. He said that the question must soon be decided—"Will you have, not free trade—for that is not the alternative—but free imports?" Protection, he declared, was not a principle, but an expedient. The member for Shrewsbury admitted that Sir Robert Peel had opposed the motion of 1836; and, with great inconsistency, then maintained that the agricultural interest was a beauty that had been wooed by many, but deluded only by one. It would not be fair, Mr. Disraeli continued, to contrast too strongly the hours of courtship with the years of possession. The gen-

tlemen of England had now the pleasures of memory, the charms of reminiscence. And forgetting, that after Sir Robert Peel had opposed, in the year 1836, this very motion, a certain brilliant anonymous writer was so much this statesman's admirer, that he dedicated the 'Letters of Runnymede' to the object of his extravagant eulogy, Mr. Disraeli concluded by hoisting the flag of Protection, and denouncing Sir Robert in these memorable words:—"Protection appears to me to be in the same condition that Protestantism was in 1828. The country will draw its moral. For my part, if we are to have Free Trade, I, who honour genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the honourable member for Stockport than by one who, through skilful parliamentary manœuvres, has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and of a great party. For myself, I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the Parliament you have betrayed. Appeal to the people, who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains this at least—the opportunity of thus publicly expressing my belief that a Conservative government is an organised hypocrisy."

This invective was not so successful as some of the same choice kind in the next session. The

country gentlemen thought that the member for Shrewsbury had gone too far, and at this time none were so ready as they to arraign the motives of their future leader. Mr. Darby said that Mr. Disraeli had once argued that free-trade sentiments belonged, not to the Whigs, but to the Tories; but now, because the government was acting on the principle of free trade, he accused Sir Robert of having stolen the clothes of the Whigs while they were bathing. Mr. Darby avowed his belief that Mr. Disraeli had bathed, not only with the Whigs but with the Radicals. Sir Robert Peel also, in reply, quoted some of Mr. Disraeli's praises of the free-trade measures of 1842, and his voluntary assertions that the Conservative minister was only following in the footsteps of Mr. Pitt. After such opinions from the member for Shrewsbury, Sir Robert rejoined, he certainly was surprised to listen to the language now used by the same individual; but this he knew, that in 1842 he held Mr. Disraeli's panegyric in the same estimation as he now regarded his attack. These were significant observations; they contained a very serious charge; and Mr. Disraeli is always ready to notice any personal attack upon himself, however eager he may be to attack others. Whether

his conscience smote him for the first and the last time, or whether he thought it wiser to leave unanswered such an accusation than to attempt refuting it, it is certain that, after the minister sat down, the member for Shrewsbury remained silent.

But he was not likely to neglect an opportunity for revenge. Sir Robert Peel had refused in the most marked manner "to bandy personalities;" but Mr. Disraeli resolved that the minister should have plenty of annoyance. The Maynooth grant offended Sir Robert Peel's ordinary supporters more even than his refusal to reward the landlords out of the consolidated fund. Such straightforward Tories as Sir Robert Inglis, might properly accuse Sir Robert Peel of being inconsistent in thus sending the message of peace to the Irish Roman Catholics; but in Mr. Disraeli, with his notions about Tory policy, it showed considerable courage to make the further endowment of Maynooth a merely personal question. Only recently he had opposed the Irish Arms Bill, and required remedial measures. Only recently he had refused to support Lord Howick's motion on the state of Ireland, because "the noble lord did not offer more than the ministers." Now what interpretation could be fairly

put on such words, but that Mr. Disraeli would support the party that offered most to the Irish Roman Catholics?

The minister had now come forward to extend the grant to the Roman Catholic college. He was now bringing forward remedial measures. He was supported by the Whigs and the Irish Roman Catholics in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli immediately took up new ground, and opposed the Maynooth grant because Sir Robert Peel had introduced it, and in a speech of extreme warmth attacked the minister. He said that Sir Robert had told them to go back to precedents. With him a great measure was always founded on a small precedent; he always traced the steam-engine to the tea-kettle: his precedents were generally tea-kettle precedents. Mr. Disraeli opposed the bill on account of the men who brought it forward; and for the same reason he called on Lord John Russell, no matter whether he approved of it or not, to vote against it. He alluded to the Conservative government exactly as 'Runnymede' had formerly alluded to the Whigs. He spoke of them as "these men." Sir Robert Peel in refusing to "bandy personalities" was endeavouring to put a stop to discussion. He wished to make the House of Commons what the

Duke of Wellington had made the House of Lords. It was not Radicalism, it was not the revolutionary spirit of the nineteenth century which had consigned "another place" to illustrious insignificance; it was Conservatism and a Conservative dictator.

What most particularly appears to have offended the member for Shrewsbury, was the advice Sir Robert Peel had given to young members, not to make brilliant speeches, but to serve on railway committees. It was the duty of Mr. Disraeli to come forward in defence of his followers. "Whenever the young men of England," he asked most indignantly in this speech, "allude to any great principle of political life or parliamentary conduct, are they to be recommended to go on a railway committee?" He went on to say, dealing out his sarcasms right and left, "another place" may be drilled into a guard-room, and the House of Commons may be degraded into a vestry. The increased Maynooth grant was not to be decided on its merits; it was to be decided upon a fact, "Who are the men that bring it forward?" Something had arisen in this country as fatal in the political world as it had been in the landed world of Ireland. We had a great parliamentary middle-man.

In the course of these pages some specimens of Mr. Disraeli's invectives against the Whigs in the earlier years of his political career, have been given. Then his object was to attack Lord John Russell, and uphold Sir Robert Peel. Now we have arrived at the period when the object of his satire was Sir Robert Peel, and when he was desirous of conciliating Lord John Russell. It is therefore peculiarly interesting and instructive to study his language at this time when hostility to Sir Robert Peel had put out of Mr. Disraeli's mind his ultra anti-Whiggish theory. "As to the Whigs," said he, in the speech on the second reading of the Maynooth Bill, "I am almost in despair of appealing to their hereditary duties, their constitutional convictions, or their historical position; but I should have thought that the noble lord was almost weary of being dragged at the triumphal car of a conqueror who did not conquer him in fair fight. I think the noble lord might have found some inspiration in the writings of that great man whom he has so often quoted, and whose fame he attempts to emulate. I should have thought that a man of the mind of the noble lord — and he has a thoughtful mind and a noble spirit—might have felt that Mr. Fox would have taken that course which I still think the noble lord, touched by his high

position, will still adopt. His party may have fallen, but it is still one connected with the history of the country."

Mr. Disraeli concluded this speech, the most brilliant and the most virulent he had yet uttered in the House of Commons, by two or three still fiercer home-thrusts at Sir Robert Peel. Cunning, he asserted, was not caution; habitual perfidy not high policy of state; and he exhorted all parties to unite and put an end to what he called "the intolerable yoke of official despotism and parliamentary imposture."

Thus, during the sessions of 1844 and 1845, we have seen Mr. Disraeli become every month more bitter in his satire on Sir Robert, and more resolute in his opposition to the Conservative ministry, until before the session of 1845 ended, he had gone to the extreme length of parliamentary hostility. We have seen the same politician who, from the commencement of the Peel government to the middle of the session of 1843, defended the cabinet on every occasion, begin to oppose them with equal pertinacity, and at length become more downright in opposition than even the Whigs on the other side of the House of Commons. The fact is undeniable, however it may be accounted for; and it is a fact of great importance; for we are now approaching

the climax of a political career, and it is of the utmost moment thus to distinguish Mr. Disraeli's personal enmity to Sir Robert Peel, from the justifiable quarrel of the most numerous section of that minister's supporters. The opposition of the Protectionists had not yet commenced; the repeal of the Corn Laws was not yet threatened; but Mr. Disraeli was at this time as much the assailant of the minister, as during the eventful session of 1846, which established a new financial and political era, confounded the calculations of ministers and their opponents, and erased the lines of demarcation between the renowned English parties which had for two centuries contended for pre-eminence.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Disraeli during these last two sessions had had recourse to his literary abilities as well as to his oratorical powers. His compositions in the closet had influenced his struggles in the senate, and he had become the acknowledged leader of those ardent young members whom the unsympathising prime minister had ignominiously consigned to the service of railway committees.

The year 1844 is remarkable as that in which a new school of English politicians was fully formed. In the Tory party there was a considerable number of young noblemen, who never having been in office, and being blessed with imaginative minds and sanguine temperaments, were far from approving of the system of expediency which the government was pursuing. Like the young patriots in the time of Walpole, their

watchwords were—purity and principle. Mr. Disraeli persuaded them that there was some profound meaning in the word Toryism, and that he was the man who understood it. They were to be the saviours of the nation. They were to redeem the age from its latitudinarian character. The youthful energies of the country were to be appealed to, and England was in future to be governed by its youth. Mr. Disraeli taught his associates to regard Lord Bolingbroke as the father of modern Toryism, and of course Mr. Disraeli was the acknowledged interpreter of Lord Bolingbroke's doctrines. The young Whig patriots, of whom Pulteney was the leader against the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, believed themselves peculiarly the champions of the cause for which Hampden and Sidney died. The young Tory patriots who followed Mr. Disraeli in opposition to Sir Robert Peel, became eloquent about the cause for which Bolingbroke suffered.

Mr. Disraeli was now for the first time the recognized leader of a small but select party. Thus far his ambition was at length gratified. Professions of political purity always produce a great effect on young minds; and the author of 'Vivian Grey' began to be revered as the living exponent of high principle. No doubt of the soundness of their conclusions ever occurred

to these amiable champions of high Toryism. Mr. Disraeli, in 'Contarini Fleming,' had said that Europe was in a state of transition from feudalism to federalism; but the gentlemen who, under the title of Young England, now began to attract public attention, seemed, so far as their doctrines could be understood, to be bent on commencing a new crusade against the realities of this revolutionary century, for the purpose of bringing Europe back again to the state in which it was during the feudal ages. They regretted the downfal of the monastic system. They sighed for the time when the humbler classes were entirely dependent on their more powerful neighbours; and as these enthusiasts were mostly wealthy and noble, this yearning after an order of peasantry was not very unnatural. Their world was a world of peers and peasants; the peers very rich, and the peasants very picturesque.

Whether Mr. Disraeli himself fully believed in this nineteenth-century feudalism, may be a question. Wilkes was never a Wilkite; and Mr. Disraeli may not have been altogether a Disraelite. It is certain that as soon as he had a prospect of becoming the leader of the Protectionist party, and of superseding Sir Robert Peel, from that moment the extreme theories of Young

England were forgotten, and this party was broken up. Some of these politicians became Whigs, some of them Radicals, and others followed Mr. Disraeli, and have recently had an opportunity of showing how intense was their hatred of corruption, and how immeasurably superior their new Toryism was to that of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone.

Be that however as it may, in 1844 the party of gentlemen under the name of Young England, determined to issue their manifesto. Mr. Disraeli was commissioned to draw up the important document; but it was understood to be the emanation of the principles professed by the party. This grave political treatise, which was to regenerate Toryism, was in the form of a novel. It was entitled 'Coningsby; or, the New Generation.' For some years Mr. Disraeli had not been before the world in his literary capacity: this work was the product of his complete maturity, and was written by the author in his responsible position as leader of a party, and as the political regenerator of the age. It was, of course, intended to be the manual of high Tory principle. To the astonishment of the sober portion of the public,

'Coningsby,' this manifesto of the 'New Generation,' was found to be full of personalities; living characters were most unhesitatingly introduced, and it had some of the most objectionable features, both of a malignant satire and of a fashionable novel. Yet this was the manifesto of Young England; this was the gospel of the new and pure Toryism.

A retired politician, whom the author of 'Coningsby' could have no motive for attacking, was even singled out, and treated as no generous man would ever treat his bitterest enemy, in the heat of a political contest. If Mr. Disraeli had disapproved of the political life of the individual, whom everybody knew to be personified in the character of Rigby, it would have been perfectly fair to have written a work on the subject, showing how this gentleman had deviated from political propriety, and how erroneous were the principles he professed. But all men must execrate the midnight stabber. And a midnight stabber is a man, who, in a work of fiction, endeavours to make a fictitious character stand for a real one, and attributes to it any vices he pleases. Nothing can be more unfair; nothing can be more reprehensible. Against such a system of attack, even the virtues of a Socrates are

no protection: the purest reputation, and the most blameless life, may be rendered odious and ridiculous in a work of fiction, by a wanton imputation of motives. A literary politician may write the biography of a public character. He may state manfully and fairly his reasons for disapproving of the actions he censures. The charges can thus be fairly made, and can be fairly tested; but it is impossible to meet any of the accusations insinuated in a work of fiction: they are, in all respects, intangible, and cannot be encountered. If they are entirely false, the novelist immediately shelters himself under the fictitious nature of his work. If they are partly true and partly false, it is impossible to separate the truth from the falsehood, and the character of the person attacked equally suffers. If they are altogether true, there is no excuse for bringing them forward in a novel: the law allows that which is plainly for the public benefit to be openly stated; and if no public benefit can be derived from such personalities, then the petty malignity by which they are dictated, is inexcusable and ought to be punished.

Yet 'Coningsby' was intended to be an eminently moral book. What were the people of England to think of a party that, even with all its high-sounding phrases about principle, thus

violated so outrageously the laws of literary warfare? It appeared that extreme personalities were allowed by the professors of this regenerate Toryism. What confidence could 'Young England' expect when it thus showed itself devoid of all propriety? The more it condemned the vices of the old Tories, the more reprehensible was the manner in which such vices were branded. But it cannot be supposed that all those well-meaning enthusiasts of feudalism approved of the manner in which their singular manifesto was executed.

'Coningsby' had the characteristic faults of the author of 'Vivian Grey;' but for 'Vivian Grey' there was at least the excuse of youth. What excuse could be offered for the personalities in 'Coningsby?' This work clearly shows how little Mr. Disraeli's character has varied in all essential particulars; for though the novel was written when the author was forty years of age, it has the most audacious peculiarities of the juvenile production of the same author twenty years before. 'Vivian Grey' might be intended as a political Don Juan, and 'Coningsby' as a political St. Anthony; but we find that however different these characters may be in conception, yet there is the same daring unscrupulousness pervading them, the same exquisitely-seasoned

scandal, the same utter recklessness of the feelings of those who are satirised, the same worldly vanity, the same determination by any means to produce a taking book. Twenty years' experience of the world had sharpened the edge of Mr. Disraeli's satire; but it does not appear to have made him kinder, more indulgent to the failings of others, or less inclined to display his own talents at their expense. Such sketches of character as there are in 'Coningsby' can only be defended by admitting that everything is fair in politics and literature, and that an author ought never to hesitate in the means he employs to produce an exciting fashionable novel.

As such, unquestionably 'Coningsby' produced a greater sensation than even 'Vivian Grey.' It became the rage. Keys were published to the characters. The first question asked in every drawing-room was, "Have you read 'Coningsby?'" Every fine lady had her own interpretation of the work; and of course all who could find any coincidences between people of their acquaintance and the delineations in the novel were at once in raptures with their own ingenuity and the cleverness of the author. All the educated gossips of the nation found matter to talk about. All the fashionable people thought

they saw the follies and vices of their neighbours hit off with inimitable point and ingenuity. All the would-be fashionable people who are ever hovering on the outskirts of the great metropolitan world, were eager to know what the objects of their idolatry were doing. All the simple money-loving, rank-adoring multitude found themselves in the presence of the great Marquis of Monmouth, the great Sidonia, the great Lord Eskdale, the great Mr. Ormsby, the great Duke of Beaumanoir, the great Eustace Lyle. Mr. Disraeli has often sneered at the servile public for their adoration of their richer brethren; but few authors of real genius have ever ministered so much to this servility as himself.

The humblest individual in 'Coningsby' is Mr. Millbank, the manufacturer; yet he is represented as a being of great social power, a Marquis of Monmouth of another school. The other characters have all many thousands a-year; and this appears to be the only qualification for being delineated by Mr. Disraeli. The Marquis of Monmouth and Lord Eskdale are the two greatest borough proprietors in England. Sidonia is the greatest merchant in the world. Mr. Ormsby is another mighty millionaire. The Duke of Beaumanoir is the prince of the

English nobility, the owner of the most magnificent of Palladian palaces, with his veins full of ancient blood. Eustace Lyle, the Roman Catholic country gentleman, is the richest commoner in England. These are the heroes of this novel. We have even nobody so humble as the Mr. Horace Grey of a former production, except Mr. Rigby, who is merely introduced for the purpose of being satirized, and is, of course, said to be of very obscure origin. Whatever else may be the qualifications for figuring in the pages of 'Coningsby,' there must be money, there must be power. This is one of the most important truths which Mr. Disraeli illustrates for the benefit of the new generation. It is a truth which the world has always been ready enough to learn, and which did not perhaps require impressing on the English people of this time.

Coningsby, the coming man of this generation, is the grandson of the Marquis of Monmouth. He is a perfect character. He is what Mr. Disraeli, on looking back from his middle age, thinks that he would have been had he had the good fortune of being born the grandson of a Marquis of Monmouth, the idol of Eton, and just reaching manhood when Sir Robert Peel became the Tory prime minister in 1841.

The character of Sidonia has puzzled many people; but the fact really is, there never was such a man. Power of all kinds, but especially worldly power, has ever been this author's adoration. It was natural that he should look with some degree of pride on the great Hebrew financiers of the age. The secret power of such a man as Rothschild, who could control cabinets, and influence all the political transactions of the earth, by pulling the wires which move the puppets who move the world, and yet remain entirely behind the scenes, calm, serene, and confident, the Hebrew merchant in his counting-house, had something in it exquisitely captivating. The author of 'Coningsby' imagined how he would act, and what he would be in the same position; and thus gradually created a Disraeli Rothschild, and depicted him in Sidonia.

Sidonia is a man without a country, and without a heart; inclined to be very sententious and very paradoxical; with a great contempt for the wisdom of others; but with boundless confidence in his own mental qualifications. He is a Jew and a physiologist, and looks at the world through the medium of Judaism and physiology. Race is with him the only truth; and as of course he considers himself of the purest race, his implicit

belief in this physiological theory is only an implicit belief in himself; and this doctrine therefore with him is neither more nor less than the most consummate vanity. He is always speaking in epigrams, and his epigrammatic wisdom is truly wonderful. He never opens his mouth without letting out a paradox. He is a devout believer in Louis Philippe, whom he worships as Ulysses, and demonstrates most conclusively that the social condition of England is in infinitely greater danger than that of France, and that every movement, however dissimilar, tends to keep the King of the French on his throne.

But Sidonia has little to do with Young England. After all, there are very few pages of the work occupied by new political ideas. We have the Doge theory again, the order of the peasantry, and some short sentences about youthful heroes; but there are no political opinions which Mr. Disraeli had not frequently repeated before they were reproduced in this novel. A political philosopher who was really convinced of the truth of his principles, and the soundness of all his opinions, would not choose the medium of a fictitious work for giving them to the world. Whenever an author wishes to deliver bold paradoxes which he cannot maintain in the open field of political discussion,

he may very fitly state them in the pages of a romance; but no earnest man who is sincerely desirous that truth should prevail, would select such a one-sided method of bringing it forward. A political novel is an absurdity. It is a virtual begging of the question; and can only convince thoughtless, half-educated, and light-minded readers. No person whose opinion is of the least value, would ever be more influenced by what is stated in a novel than in a regular political treatise.

The question of pauperism is certainly the gravest which can come before a legislature, and the unfairness of this political novel-writing cannot be better illustrated than by showing how Mr. Disraeli deals with it in 'Coningsby.' The New Poor Law is his aversion; and Lord Everingham, who is in favour of it, is represented as "a clear-headed, cold-blooded man." We have then the young Henry Sydney, the representative of all that is noble and generous, talking Mr. Disraeli's own opinions about the order of peasantry. Mr. Eustace Lyle is also young and amiable; he is of immense wealth, and chooses to amuse himself by reviving the monastic institutions. He has almsgiving twice a week. On visiting this Catholic gentleman's splendid mansion at St. Genevieve, the party lunch on venison

pasty and Malvoisie, drive little fat ponies, and on stopping to look at a beautiful sylvan scene, with the deer browsing before them, hear the monastic bell ring. It was almsgiving day: the poor people in the neighbourhood were coming along the valley. That cold-blooded man, Lord Everingham, full of the New Poor Law, immediately asks "What check have you?" Eustace Lyle informs his guests, that though the poor might be relieved without all this ceremony, yet he thinks ceremonies of much importance, and wishes the people to comprehend that property is their protector and their friend. The Duchess, who has been quoting as she enjoys her luncheon, Sir Walter Scott's lines—

> "Now broach me a cask of Malvoisie,
> Bring pasty of the doe,"

replies to the host, "My reason is with you, Mr. Lyle, as well as my heart." And the question of pauperism is dismissed by a pretty picture of an old grey-headed man with his staff and grandchild, the widow with her infant at her breast, dames in red cloaks, maidens with light baskets, curly-headed urchins with demure looks, and two or three stalwart labourers out of work, all blessing the bell that was sounding from the tower of St. Genevieve. In this manner are the evils of the New Poor Law, and the advantages of

monastic institutions and almsgiving, most satisfactorily illustrated. The author never supposes for a moment that it is a much greater sacrifice for poor genteel families to pay the heavy rates under the New Poor Law, than for Mr. Eustace Lyle, "the richest commoner in England," to give alms in the monkish fashion twice a-week. There is something exquisitely picturesque in the monastic bell, and the almsgiving at St. Genevieve; but there is nothing picturesque in the figure of the tax-gatherer with his red book appearing before the door. Unfortunately, however, only the richest commoners in England can gratify their taste after the manner of Mr. Eustace Lyle. Many thousands of most respectable people find it a very hard task to pay the poor-rates as they come due, without any charming mediæval associations.

Thus are the political disquisitions worked out, and they may therefore be left to the fair consideration of all unprejudiced persons. The author of 'Coningsby' will only convince those who are prepared to accept his word for every assertion, and are ready to forget all the great realities of the age. The point of interest to those who have thus far pondered on Mr. Disraeli's biography, is the perfect keeping of this production of his manhood with all his preceding characteris-

tics. The indications in 'Coningsby' are decisive against the theory of mental and moral mutation which some panegyrists, who cannot for very shame praise Mr. Disraeli's earlier career, and yet, from political sympathy, are full of admiration for his maturity, find it convenient to adopt. In 'Coningsby' we have the same overweening ambition, and frequently the same overstrained language, which appear so ludicrous in 'Contarini Fleming.'

Coningsby happens to be caught in a thunderstorm as he is musing in a forest. We are horrified at finding that "the various voices of the mighty trees might be distinguished as they expressed their terror or their agony. The oak roared; the beach shrieked; the elm sent forth its deep and long-drawn groan; while ever and anon, amid a momentary pause, the passion of the ash was heard in moans of thrilling anguish."

Coningsby is overtaken by a summer shower. "Nature, like man, sometimes weeps from gladness. It is the joy and tenderness of her heart that seeks relief; and these are summer showers. In this instance the vehemence of her emotion was transient, though the tears kept stealing down her cheeks for a long time, and gentle sighs

and sobs might for some period be distinguished."

Coningsby, when in love, comes to the bank of a rushing river. The stream is "foaming in the moonlight, and wafting on its blue breast the shadow of a thousand stars." "O river!" he said, "that rollest to my mistress, bear her, bear her, my heart!

So in this, the most elaborate of Mr. Disraeli's matured fictions, we have all the faults of 'Vivian Grey,' 'Contarini Fleming,' and the 'Wondrous Tale of Alroy.' The pretensions of high political morality, and the contempt it indicates for the Toryism of Perceval and Liverpool, only make its bitter personalities, and its unscrupulous satire, the more blameable. Mr. Croker never wrote a political novel, and called his opponents rascals and scoundrels under other names. Those who are hurt by articles in a review can at least reply to them; they can point out their errors; they can correct their misrepresentations. But in a political novel, with characters understood to be real, but under feigned names, they who are attacked can make no defence. Everything is in favour of the assailant; the defendant cannot under any circumstances have the least protection. Such a mode of warfare would be the

very last that a wise, a generous, or a good man would think of employing.

Still 'Coningsby' was highly successful, so far as the number of copies sold could be accepted as a test of success. This is the only kind of success which Mr. Disraeli believes in; for he says, in the preface to the edition of 1849, "the success of this work was *not* questionable," and then tells us that three editions were sold in England in three months, and fifty thousand copies required in America. Of course the multitude read 'Coningsby,' but perhaps an earnest man of genius would not consider such a popularity as the most unquestionable proof of sterling merit. There are many peculiar French novels which have been more read than even 'Coningsby:' yet their success has been still more than questionable. Perhaps it may be found that popularity is not always success; that of all literary successes at the outset, it is the least trustworthy. There were not three editions of 'Hamlet,' or of 'Paradise Lost,' sold in the first three months of publication. Yet it is to be hoped that the success of Shakspeare and Milton is as unquestionable as even that of Mr. Disraeli. If the success of 'Coningsby' "was not questionable," it is unquestionable that this manual of the new

generation is a very questionable book, written in a very questionable spirit.

But this sale of three editions in three months was a good index of the popular taste. Mr. Disraeli hastened to gratify it more largely, and before another year elapsed, another work from the same pen was ready. This was hoisting sail while the breeze was blowing.

Mr. Carlyle's 'Past and Present,' published in 1843, set many people to meditate upon the condition of England. This book was quite a godsend to Mr. Disraeli: it gave him matter that, judiciously used, might be turned both against Whigs and Tories. There was much of Carlyle in 'Coningsby,' but it was Carlylism adapted to the use of an ambitious politician, and of the great world. No two men can be more opposed to each other than the brave old man of letters who wrote the 'Past and Present,' and the vindictive political satirist who penned the fashionable chapters of 'Coningsby.' But Carlyle supplied Mr. Disraeli with ideas which were very gracefully scattered throughout the pages of the novel. What Mr. Carlyle calls "hero-worship," is neatly phrased in 'Coningsby' "the heroic principle." Carlyle's hero-worship only incited him to work manfully forward as the

philosophical thinker of his generation; but Mr. Disraeli, when adopting Carlyle's heroic creed, considered himself as the hero who was to be worshipped, and who was to be prime minister. Thus Carlyle's hero, Diogenes Teufelsdroeckh, always writes and thinks, and is left at the end of his biography, writing and thinking: but Mr. Disraeli's hero, Coningsby, gains a large estate, a mansion in Park Lane, and a seat in Parliament; for these constitute the heroic principle of Coningsbyism, and are set up as the goal of all the aspirations of the "new generation."

Mr. Carlyle must have been somewhat astonished to find how his suggestions were turned into materials for party attacks; how his praise of Abbot Sampson was coolly directed against the Whig aristocracy, because one or two of them, in the sixteenth century, were enriched by the spoliation of the monasteries. The Whigs have little reason to be thankful to Mr. Disraeli; but then the Tories get no more justice from him; and in 'Coningsby' and 'Sybil' he shows, what his Radical address to the electors of Marylebone announced, an implicit contempt for both the "aristocratic parties." In 'Sybil, or the Two Nations,' which was published in 1845, there are evidences of the unreasonable

confidence which the popularity of 'Coningsby' had excited. The political chapters of 'Coningsby,' though paradoxical and objectionable enough, are written with the semblance of moderation. But in 'Sybil' the author again dashes beyond all bounds, not only of pardonable paradox, not only of legitimate induction, but even of common sense. The 'Vindication of the English Constitution' is again re-written. We have much about "the fine genius of the injured Bolingbroke;" and much about Burke being exactly to the Whigs what Bolingbroke was to the Tories; we are gravely informed that Burke's hatred of the French Revolution sprung from Mr. Fox having been allowed to supplant him in the leadership of the Whig party; and that the 'Reflections on the French Revolution,' and the 'Letters on a Regicide Peace,' were all inspired by a "hoarded vengeance." Mr. Disraeli highly admires Burke for thus, through personal considerations, becoming the Nemesis of the Whig aristocracy, "pouring the vials of his vengeance into the heart of Christendom,"—"stimulating the panic of a world by the wild pictures of his inspired imagination,"—"bending in twain the proud oligarchy that had dared to rise and insult him," —and "amid the frantic exultation of his country

placing his heel upon the neck of the ancient serpent." The English history is, Mr. Disraeli informs his readers, altogether perverted and distorted. If it could be properly written, we should be more astonished than in reading the Roman Annals by Niebuhr. There are characters in English history entirely suppressed, such as Major Wildman and Lord Shelburne. We have much praise of Lord Shelburne, and much abuse of the "great Revolution families;" although Mr. Disraeli was very soon to form a close political alliance with a distinguished representative of one of these great revolution families, and subsequently to write his political biography. If, however, these Whig nobles were Venetians, the Tory aristocracy, we are told, were created by Mr. Pitt, of fat graziers and second-rate esquires; and that this minister, by opening the peerage to every man of ten thousand a-year, sounded the knell of the Venetian system. Charles the First, we are also gravely informed, was really a martyr, though a martyr not to the Church, but to direct taxation. James the Second only wished, says Mr. Disraeli, to blend the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches together, and only did what Her Majesty Queen Victoria is doing, that is, endeavouring to terminate terrible political and religious miscon-

ceptions. James the Second sent an embassy openly to Rome; but Queen Victoria has also a secret envoy at the Vatican: therefore, according to this profound political philosopher, it is quite clear that James the Second worked for the same good object as our reigning sovereign.

It would be idle to show the unparalleled absurdity of such assertions as these; they are only good for proving that this author's habitually paradoxical spirit is as strong in his later years as it was when he wrote his first political treatises. How any author or politician could pen such palpable misrepresentations, and stake his credit on such gross historical perversions, is truly amazing. But even though they are to be considered simply as ingenious paradoxes, some degree of consistency might be expected in them, as paradoxes. One assertion of Mr. Disraeli destroys another. Throughout 'Coningsby' and 'Sibyl,' we are frequently reminded that it is to the royal authority we must look for security. The sovereign must no longer be enslaved. We must have a real, not a nominal monarchy. It is to parliaments, and not to our kings, that we owe national debts, and corn-laws, Dutch finances, and French wars. The original sin of the Whig aristocracy is, that they make an English king a

Venetian Doge. The great question is asked, if the Venetian system is ended, may not the sovereign also have ceased to be a Doge? And the novel ends with a prayer of Mr. Disraeli, that we may once more possess a "free monarchy," and a privileged and prosperous people.

Thus 'Sybil' concludes: how does it commence? Much of the first volume is occupied with the history of Whig magnificoes, and of their crime in usurping the lands belonging to the monks. Mr. Disraeli never reflects that the monasteries were abolished, and their property confiscated by an eminently "free monarch;" that it was Henry the Eighth, who, uncontrolled by parliaments, and obeying the dictates of his own absolute will, abrogated the monastic institutions. Many persons may doubt whether it would have been for the benefit of the people that all this property should have been left in the hands of the ecclesiastics. They may be, perhaps, well aware, that even at this day, the estates of the Church are by no means so productive, or so well cultivated, as those of the secular nobility. They may know that the county of Durham is an eyesore in English agriculture. They may believe, that, so far from all these monastic lands relieving the poor, had they really been applied to their maintenance,

they would have engendered the very poverty and idleness they professed to relieve. The examples of countries in which the monastic system has long flourished, afford us no reason for believing that energy and industry can develop themselves so strongly in the vicinity of such institutions, as in the Protestant countries where the monasteries have been abolished. These, however, may be disputed questions; but as Mr. Disraeli considers the monkish corporations as so remarkably beneficial, he ought to have remembered that their destruction was the work of the English king, who in the whole range of our history, was the least under the domination of his subjects. That unhallowed deed was, at all events, not committed by a Venetian aristocracy. It was the act of an absolute king. It follows, therefore, that if we are to get rid of the Parliament, if all aristocratical and popular combinations are to be done away with, we can have no security against falling under the tyranny of another Henry the Eighth. The only control Mr. Disraeli imagines is "public opinion;" and the deification of this indefinite agency, Mr. Disraeli considers sound Toryism. The estates of the realm are to be abolished, an absolute monarch is to be enthroned, anonymous editors of newspapers are to indicate what is to be done. Now who cannot

see that this is making the able editor, master of the sovereign? Mr. Disraeli's grand Conservative Reform must end in establishing a much more terrible Venetian system than that from which he would relieve us. Ministers are at least directed by constitutional forms; they are responsible to a recognised authority; but substitute anonymous editors of newspapers in their place, and we have indeed a Council of Ten. Neither More, nor Harrington, nor Mr. Disraeli's exemplary Bolingbroke, ever proposed a political scheme, so vague, so visionary, and so revolutionary, as that which is hinted at in these two political novels.

If Mr. Disraeli were consistent, he ought to admire every action of Henry the Eighth, ought especially to praise the abolition of the monasteries, and absolutely to worship those Venetian aristocrats who, he says, were created by this arbitrary Tudor. Henry the Eighth had as much right to take the estates of the abbots, as Charles the First, in defiance of all law and justice, to levy taxes without the consent of Parliament. If Charles the First were "the martyr to direct taxation," the abbots were surely as much the victims of direct taxation. Henry the Eighth had as much right to create a Duke of Bedford, and give him estates out of this treasury of direct taxation, as

Charles the First to levy ship-money in defiance of constitutional authority, or as George the Third to make his favourite prime minister, though Lord Bute had not the least parliamentary connexion, had never made a single speech in the House of Lords, and, until he was exalted above all the great statesmen of the age, had not even a seat in Parliament.

If Mr. Disraeli's system of Toryism were correct, how comes it that he was in opposition to the administration of Lord Melbourne? It is well known that this minister possessed in the highest degree the confidence of the young Queen, and that Sir Robert Peel, in 1839, did not enjoy her favour. Knowing this, Mr. Disraeli was one of the most furious of Lord Melbourne's assailants, and one of the members of Parliament who drove this minister from power. Surely Lord Melbourne was more a statesman than Lord Bute. Surely he had a more reputable following than the "king's friends," of George the Third. Yet Mr. Disraeli calls those who opposed George the Third in his American war, Venetians, and himself opposed the inclinations of Queen Victoria by helping to turn out Lord Melbourne. Whether was the American war, or Lord Melbourne's projected tariff reform, more worthy of support? Mr. Disraeli says that James the Second was only

endeavouring to put an end to religious animosities when he so wantonly attacked the Established Church, and set at nought every legal and constitutional power in the realm. But Mr. Disraeli was himself one of the most indignant censors of the Whigs because they showed the least favour to the Irish Roman Catholics in 1836. It is certainly much to be regretted that we cannot have an absolute monarchy and a free Parliament together; and so it is that we cannot do without all government, and that every man cannot be permitted to do that which is right in his own eyes. But it is not true that even when kings have no domineering parliaments, they can do exactly as they please. The Sultan of Turkey, at this day, is as much in dread of his own subjects as of the Emperor Nicholas; and Louis Napoleon is obliged to humour the millions, find bread for the hungry, and occupation for the idle.

Mr. Disraeli is so deeply in love with the abbots that he asks, why were there no rebellions while they bore rule? There were rebellions, and very formidable rebellions, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There were rebellions even in the time of Henry the Eighth. Has Mr. Disraeli forgotten the Kentish insurrection, and how even this imperious sovereign was obliged to

humiliate himself before his discontented subjects? The most interesting portion of the history of those times is the account of those strange social insurrections to which writers and readers have paid so little attention. Chartism and Socialism, in fact, existed in the days of the Plantagenets and the Tudors; but Mr. Disraeli in his 'Sybil, or the Two Nations,' has so much sympathy with Frost, Williams, and Jones, that he altogether forgets that such men as Jack Cade, John Ball, and Wat Tyler, ever existed. It would seem that the author who asks "Why were there no insurrections in the times of the lord abbots?" was of the opinion that until the abblition of the monasteries, there never had been a popular disturbance. But all sound students of English history must know that the oppression of the multitude in the earlier ages of modern Europe was really terrible. There were then no newspapers to incite the people to rebellion; there were then no dissatisfied politicians to deal in the accumulation of popular indignation. When an insurrection became general, we may be well assured that it had been provoked by intolerable grievances. What should we think if any woman were outraged in the manner of Wat Tyler's daughter? Did not that happen in the times of the lord abbots? Were there no lord abbots in

the time of Jack Cade? Were there no lord abbots in France during the times of the Jacquerie? Were there no lord abbots in continental Europe when the Bastile fell, and the great French Revolution broke out?

But it is useless to write in defence of such obvious truths against such incredible paradoxes. If Mr. Disraeli would only read Shakspeare's Second Part of Henry the Sixth, he would find that many of the grievances set forth in the Chartist's "National Petition," were really current in the Elizabethan age, and even in the times of which Shakspeare wrote. The old English chronicles are full of the misery and discontent prevalent in the middle ages.

This Mr. Disraeli never notices. His object is to show that the aristocracy of England is composed of those who plundered the Church in the reign of Henry the Eighth, those who plundered India in the reign of George the Third, and those who plundered the nation in the reign of George the Fourth. In 'Sybil' the nobility are represented as scoundrels and the people as serfs. Now, if this were true, what would be the inevitable inference? That the House of Lords ought to be abolished, and the estates of the peers divided among the people. Cobbett and Hunt agreed with Mr. Disraeli's premises; they even

used his language, but they did not shrink from the conclusion. Mr. Disraeli is not original in his declamations against the aristocracy; but he is quite original in supposing that such language can be held by any one professing Tory principles. He only says what revolutionists have said in all ages. When the French nobility were to be destroyed, we know that unprincipled demagogues were ever declaiming about the scandals of their origin. What object, however, a Conservative writer can propose in thus exaggerating the faults of such representatives of the aristocracy as his Lord Marney and Lord Mowbray it is difficult to comprehend. Even though every individual Whig noble had really been raised to the peerage by Henry the Eighth, and endowed with some portion of the lands of the monasteries, it is three centuries since the estates of the monks were confiscated. Three centuries are a considerable space of time in the history of a great nation. In these three centuries England has flourished as no other empire ever flourished. Is it for a Tory politician to be continually dwelling on the abuses of the times of Henry the Eighth? Are three centuries of no account? Are there to be no such considerations as length of time, or the rights of prescription, in this new Toryism? Even according to the laws of the realm, no

private family who had been dispossessed of an estate three centuries ago, could, after such an interval, have its claim allowed. It can surely, then, serve no useful purpose, but on the contrary, can only invite revolution, thus to dwell on the evils connected with the origin of some of the brightest ornaments of the English nobility. These were exceptional cases; but Mr. Disraeli endeavours to infer from them that all the Whig nobility have in all ages been enjoying that to which they were not entitled, had first robbed the Church, then enslaved the monarch, and at length degraded the people. The Tory nobility are represented in 'Sybil' as worse than the Whigs. If the Whigs were designing politicians, they at least, as Mr. Disraeli allows, have been nobles for three centuries; but the Tory aristocracy he pictures as entirely new, and formed of the very offscourings of English society. Lord Mowbray's father was a waiter, and Mr. Pitt's nobles are mostly graziers and stock-jobbers. Amid all these aristocratical abuses, we have the stern reality of the Chartists and their wild agitation.

It was of course to be expected, after Mr. Disraeli's parliamentary conduct in 1839, that he would, when writing on this subject, be very unjust to the middle classes. Chartists appear

to be the only persons with whom he heartily sympathises in this novel: severely as he has treated the capitalists, he has treated the aristocracy more hardly still. Yet he has strong aristocratic yearnings. He could not choose a hero really from the humbler ranks of society. We become interested in Gerard and Sybil; we sympathise with the love of Egremont for this daughter of the people. We feel that the humbler classes only want education and quiet homes to make them as noble and as pure as the aristocracy of the land. Sybil is a shining light amid all the surrounding darkness. But so inveterate is Mr. Disraeli's habit of associating all purely noble qualities with high birth, so little confidence has he in any merely personal distinctions, that even Sybil, the Chartist's daughter, the champion of her order, is discovered to be the true heir to Mowbray Castle, and to have the richest aristocratic blood of England in her veins.

Mr. Disraeli could not see what an error in art such a climax to a work of that nature was. All the interest we took in the daughter of Trafford's superintendent, vanishes when she becomes the representative of the Mowbrays, and the titled Lady Marney. She had always maintained that there was an inseparable gulf between

the aristocracy and the multitude; that there was nothing in common between the race of the oppressors and the race of the oppressed; and that she would live and die among the poor and the lowly. But at the end of the third volume she is found to be of the race of the oppressors; and when we next hear of her, she is moving in the fashionable world, and has just come from an Italian tour.

Mr. Disraeli was never more mistaken than when he supposed himself a genuine advocate of the poorer classes. He is indeed their advocate to a certain extent; he will support them against a political party that he hates; for to attribute all the evils of Chartism to his political opponents has an exceedingly good effect; but his sympathies with the Chartists will be found on examination to be those of a party politician, and not those of an earnest philanthropist.

All his great heroes are distinguished, not only by their intellectual powers, but also by their high birth. 'Contarini Fleming' is descended from the noblest of the Venetian aristocracy, and his father is an eminent German statesman. Lord Cadurcis and Marmion Herbert are both of the purest blood; and when Herbert's picture is described, the stately castle of his ancestors must be one of the accessories to the portrait of the

poet and philosopher. Ferdinand Armine is sprung from a stock of genuine old English baronets, and is an only son and heir. Coningsby is the grandson of one of the greatest of English peers, and all his attributes are princely. Tancred, Lord Montacute, is the only son of a great English duke, and will of course himself be a duke. Sybil, the best of Mr. Disraeli's heroines, seemed at first an exception to his rule of reserving his pen for the delineation of interesting members of the aristocracy; but before Egremont marries her he becomes Lord Marney, by their union the estates of Marney and Mowbray are joined, and Sybil and her husband are not only of the very highest rank, but have such extensive possessions as can scarcely be equalled by those of any other grandee.

In future ages, when the historian looks back at the ideas of Young England, the great British empire in the time of Queen Victoria must appear in a very perplexing condition. The nation was to be saved by the "energies of heroic youth." Experience was scouted as expediency. The writings of an immoral infidel of the eighteenth century were recommended for the studies of the rising generation, who were to bring back an age of faith. The ceremonies of the feudal times were to be revived. The monasteries were to

be restored. All the English history was to be re-written. Paradoxes were to be received as principles. Assertions were to stand for facts. Political morality was made to consist of clever personalities. The leader of the party of Young England wrote books in which every human virtue was ascribed to his few ardent aristocratic followers, and every human vice to all his opponents. He lectured at the Manchester Athenæum, and the only advice he gave to the youthful mechanics, was "to aspire." He sketched his admirers from life in his novels, and made them in love with their own perfections. There never was such a party; there never was such a leader; there never were such extraordinary political manifestos.

Young England was at the height of its glory in the autumn of 1845, when cabinet council after cabinet council was meeting, and the prime minister of England was meditating a great scheme which was to test the sincerity of the young politicians who represented themselves as exclusively the friends of the labouring multitude. And some of those imaginative political regenerators, who execrated the New Poor Law, drew such beautiful pictures of the monastic institutions, and advocated ceremonious almsgiving twice a-week, were the most determined

in their efforts for their maintenance of the Corn Laws in the great final struggle against monopoly which was now drawing near. The leader of Young England was to become the leader of the Protectionists. The great crisis of Mr. Disraeli's life was approaching. He could scarcely have foreseen when, in his recent political novel, he associated Dutch finance and Corn Laws together as the odious legacies of a Venetian aristocracy, that in the next year he would be the foremost champion in opposing the repeal of the last Corn Laws which were ever permitted to exist in England.

CHAPTER XI.

DURING the recess of 1845, people know not what to believe. The reports of Sir Robert Peel's open withdrawal from the ranks of the Protectionists, the ministerial dissensions, the resignation of the cabinet, the failure of Lord John Russell in forming an administration, the reconstruction of the Conservative ministry, and all the hopes and fears of the Christmas must have kept one honourable member in an extraordinarily excited state. It was felt to be an agitating crisis by the humblest of Englishmen. All persons looked forward to the meeting of Parliament as to the catastrophe of a drama of great interest. But to Mr. Disraeli, what an opportunity was now to be afforded! How promising was the prospect! How im-

portant the occasion! To trample underneath his feet that supercilious statesman who had so scornfully neglected genius, to widen the breach between the angry Tories and their great leader, to aim at one devoted head the thunderbolt of vengeance, to hurl from the pedestal the idol he had once adored, but had lately declared to be no god at all, but only a ridiculous piece of clay, to become himself the divinity to be worshipped by country gentlemen of such boundless faith, and be acknowledged as the deity he had long felt himself: now or never was the hour.

But in proportion as the goal of an ardent ambition appeared in sight, was the feverish anxiety of the eager candidate for parliamentary renown. Had the minister really forfeited the allegiance of his tried adherents? Would they really at last trust him no longer? Would Sir Robert boldly bring in a Bill for the abolition of the Corn Laws? Might not such an adroit parliamentary tactician devise some middle course, and thus conciliate all parties by a skilful compromise? Who could say what the dexterous prime minister might not effect by attempting to reconcile the conflicting claims of rival interests? He had more than once changed the course of his policy without losing the votes of his supporters.

He could only be defeated by a combination, and it was far from certain that such a combination could be effected. Who could even count on the Whigs voting against Sir Robert, when he introduced a bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws? Only last year, consistently acting up to their professions of religious liberty, they had refused, at the honourable member for Shrewsbury's earnest entreaty, to make the Maynooth Bill a personal question between them and the minister, and by their devotion to their principles, though in opposition to their interests, had carried Sir Robert through his difficulties. Would they not take the same course now? Would not the Radicals and the disciples of the Manchester school rally round the minister who had dared to come manfully forward and repeal those laws they had so long abominated? Popular prejudices too, were against the grant to Maynooth; but popular prejudices were all in favour of cheap bread: might not Sir Robert Peel become a most popular minister, and bid defiance to the outcry of the agriculturists?

Such doubts and forebodings must have checked Mr. Disraeli's effusions of joy at the approach of his anticipated triumph. That Sir Robert Peel was yielding to the impulse of a

dreadful necessity; that the Irish people were in danger of dying of starvation; that the potato crop had failed, famine was anticipated, and millions of human beings were deprived of the commonest necessaries of life; that in the event of such awful calamities as a whole people amid the opulence, civilization, and glory of the great British empire, begging for a morsel of bread, stretching out their emaciated hands for a potato, and dying in hovels by the wayside, all the sophistries of agricultural eloquence must be exposed; that agitation on a gigantic scale was in progress out of doors, and the absurdity of corn laws clearly demonstrated to the unsophisticated intelligence of the multitude; that the manufacturers at Manchester were even preparing to take by storm the strongholds of Protection, by swamping those constituencies which had been expressly created for the benefit of the landed interests, were considerations which never occurred to the keen spirit who was so eagerly counting the days which must elapse before his last warfare with the prime minister was to commence.

To the general historian must be left the exposition of all those important circumstances which induced Sir Robert Peel to undertake the repeal

of those laws of which he had hitherto been the supporter. The biographer of Mr. Disraeli must not, however, forget that the principal reason that influenced the prime minister, was the extraordinary and almost incredible success of the free trade experiments which were commenced in 1842, and which the member for Shrewsbury had so enthusiastically maintained to be in perfect accordance with the system of Mr. Pitt, and not only of all sound commercial principles, but of the original Tory policy. Sir Robert had before this time declared that Protection, as a principle, could not be maintained; and Mr. Disraeli, at the end of the last session, had affirmed that Protection could not be regarded as a principle, but as an expedient. The minister had for three years avowedly proceeded on a system of abolishing Protection. His success in his financial changes had far exceeded the most sanguine expectations. He had reduced the customs duties by four millions, and in 1845, their amount, after such a direct loss, was half a million more than the whole amount in 1842. During the interval, the exports of the country had increased by ten millions. The moral condition of the people had kept pace with the physical improvement of the nation. There was no sedition; there was no discontent.

The sale of every great article on which Protection had been diminished was enormously extended. With these facts staring in the face of every considerate politician, the principle of free trade was no longer a mere theory, however conclusive might be the arguments on which it was advocated. It had now become, according to all the laws of Baconian induction, a most successful experiment; and in political philosophy, as well as in natural science, experiment is everything. To maintain the Corn Laws, notwithstanding the successful and conclusive tests which Sir Robert Peel had himself applied, was therefore becoming every day more difficult, more indefensible, more immoral.

Thus stood the case of free trade when Parliament was prorogued in the autumn of 1845. Alarming reports came from Ireland by every post. The potato crop was very indifferent; a complete failure of this staff of life to the Milesian millions, was threatened; a famine, with all its fearful attributes, was expected. With good harvests and high prices, the Corn Laws might have continued unmitigated to the general election. But with this unexpected calamity impending over the British domains, and, as was most probable, over all Europe, the feeble props by which the fabric of Protection had been sustained

gave way, and the repeal of the Corn Laws was inevitable.

Mr. Disraeli, after his short experience of official life, in a moment of candour confessed that the responsibilities and duties of an English minister were "more than a man could bear." But few of us have ever reflected on the awful responsibility of a prime minister, who in a time of famine ventures to uphold a Corn Law. He is more to be pitied than the unfortunate beggar who dies of want; for he is the keeper of all his brethren, and for the life of the meanest subject in the British dominions he is answerable; if not before any earthly tribunal, most surely on that great day when kings and ministers must stand together with the destitute and the oppressed at the tribunal of the Most High. Even according to the maxims of this world, the minister's first duty was not to his party, but to his country. After Lord John Russell had failed in constructing a new administration, and the leaders of the Protectionists had shrunk from the task of taking the reins of government, Sir Robert Peel was bound by his official oath, and by something more weighty, if possible, than even an official oath, to attempt, at the sacrifice of every party and every personal consideration, the repeal of those laws which he had now become convinced, could no

longer continue with safety to the state and to every noble institution of the empire. Rising heroically, therefore, to the moral elevation of his great position, he resolved, as prime minister, to meet the Parliament, repeal the Corn Laws, and save the country. The most stubborn Protectionists, even in the rage of conflict, acknowledged that, in taking this course, the minister acted the part of an honest man, and the awful experience of the famines of 1847, and the revolutions of 1848, proved that he had acted the part of a wise one.

Many of the most experienced and far-seeing of Sir Robert Peel's followers were doubtless guilty of inconsistency in abandoning Protection. But Mr. Disraeli's course had been so peculiar, that had he resolved to vote for the repeal of the Corn Laws, and could his motives have been judged from his principles, and not from his personalities, he was, perhaps, the only member on the Conservative side of the House who might have supported the Bill without inconsistency. What a conclusive speech he might have delivered, without adopting either the language of the protectionists or the extreme free-traders! He might have said, most unanswerably, "You cannot reproach me with giving up the principle of protection; for I never maintained that protection was a principle.

I never maintained that the Tory party was connected by the bond of restrictive laws. All the reproaches which are showered on the head of the right honourable baronet and his recent converts around me, at least fall harmless. I have always asserted that the Tory party was really the democratic party. I have always asserted that the principles of free trade were exclusively Tory principles. When the prime minister reformed the tariff in 1842, I showed that he was acting in perfect harmony with the principles of Mr. Pitt, and of all sound Tory policy. I said in 1843 that I would reserve to myself, with regard to the details of the Corn Laws, the most unbounded licence. I argued that these laws were not to be defended as part of a system of protection; I declared that they were an exception to the general principle of free trade; and, only in the last session, I affirmed that Protection was not a principle, but an expedient. Now, what is the meaning of political expediency, but that it must be governed by circumstances? The maintenance of the Corn Laws was, therefore, with me, a mere question of circumstances. The circumstances in which I affirmed that these laws were an exception to the general principle of free trade, no longer exist. The potato crop is believed to be a total failure; we know not how soon a

famine may occur; the most dreadful rebellions are those of the stomach. Under these circumstances, I should be unworthy the name of a statesman, I should be tampering with my duty as a responsible legislator, if I were to sacrifice the means of government to the end, by hesitating to give my vote for the repeal of these laws, which create nothing but discontent; which put nothing into the pockets of the agriculturists; and which are now no longer an exception to those principles of democratic Toryism which, through good report and evil report, I have so consistently advocated." Who can deny, after studying Mr. Disraeli's political career throughout the four years of the Conservative government previous to the session of 1846, that had he voted for the repeal of the Corn Laws, and delivered such a speech as is here supposed, his position would have been unassailable, and his arguments unanswerable? Who can deny that it was more inconsistent in him to turn round in 1846, and defend the Corn Laws on the principle of Protection, than to vote for their repeal as no longer an exception to the principle of free trade?

How Mr. Disraeli thought himself justified in acting, became evident on the first night of this eventful session. On the 22nd of January, Parliament was opened by the Queen in person.

Lord Francis Egerton, the noble poet to whom Mr. Disraeli had dedicated the tragedy of Count Alarcos, moved the Address in the House of Commons, and avowed that he had reluctantly become a convert to free trade. After the address had been seconded by Mr. Beckett Denison, Sir Robert Peel rose, and entered into an elaborate exposition of all the circumstances which had induced him to place his resignation in the hands of her Majesty, and again, with a reconstructed cabinet, present himself to the House as the minister of the crown. He detailed the success of all his financial experiments; showed how, in every instance in which Protection had been reduced, the trade had more extensively flourished; how, during the last three years, the conviction had gradually been forced upon his mind that restrictive laws were not politic; and how he had felt it impossible to meet any longer Mr. Villiers' annual motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws with a direct negative. He confessed that the immediate cause of his decision had been the failure of the potato crop; quoted the conclusive evidence of the most distinguished men of science, and the most eminent local authorities, to the effect that a serious deficiency had arisen; recounted the peculiar circumstances attending the dissolution of the cabinet, and concluded with a

powerful statement of what he considered to be true Conservative policy. Lord John Russell followed him with a narrative of his recent official miscarriage.

When the Whig leader finished his speech, the night was far advanced, and the audience exhausted. No intimation had been given of the scheme the government intended to introduce; the exposition of their measures was reserved for another occasion. It was whispered that Sir Robert had hit upon a plan which would satisfy all parties. His speech had produced a great effect; and not a single voice had yet been raised in opposition. His facts had been unanswered, his arguments unrefuted; Lord John Russell had only confirmed the assertions of his rival. For Mr. Disraeli to rise, therefore, as he acknowledges he did, for the purpose of "attacking the minister," and "to give the cue" to the country before the measures had been even hinted at, showed plainly the spirit in which the member for Shrewsbury was prepared to carry on the contest. As he had done on the discussion of the Maynooth grant, and on all the other measures of the minister for two sessions, so he now made the policy of the government entirely a personal question. He "ventured to rise and attack the minister."

Such was, indeed, Mr. Disraeli's speech. There was not one word about the Irish famine, nor one word about the success of all the great financial experiments which the prime minister had recapitulated. Mr. Disraeli seems to have considered himself fully justified in merely attacking Sir Robert, for the purpose, as he avows, of giving the cue to the country. He never appears to have reflected, that after all, unless the facts could be met, it would answer no public purpose to succeed in making the most responsible adviser of the sovereign, ridiculous.

He took care to inform Sir Robert at the commencement of this oration, that he was not one of the converts who doubtless abounded; characterised these free-trade principles as new opinions; and, just as, when he first assailed the prime minister in 1843, he asserted that the cabinet had been formed principally on an Irish policy, he now, with his graceful facility of recurring to first principles, declared, that it was originally the "sacred cause of Protection" which had carried the ministers into office. Like the Turkish admiral, who, during the war in the Levant, had steered his fleet into the port of the enemy, Sir Robert Peel had undertaken to fight for this cause, and now assumed the right of following his own judgment. The right honourable baronet, like Sir

Robert Walpole, spoke of himself as sole minister. He had talked in a high-flying tone, appealed to posterity, and spoken of great statemanship. A great statesman ought to aim at the realization of an original idea, and not watch how the wind sets, and trim his sails to catch the passing breeze. Sir Robert Peel had about as much right to the character of a great statesman, as one who jumped up behind a coach had to that of a great whip. Votes were the right honourable gentleman's only touchstone; to touch him to the quick, his opponents must touch the state of the poll. It was all very well for the prime minister, and the "imps of fame" who followed him, to refer everything to posterity; perhaps the only posterity some of them were looking forward to was quarter day. Posterity would know very little about most of them; they who went down to posterity were as rare as planets. Mr. Disraeli concluded this address in the same manner as his speech on the Maynooth grant, by calling on all parties, whatever might be their opinions about free trade, to unite in opposing free politics.

If this speech be compared with that which the member for Shrewsbury might, according to his principles, have consistently delivered, the effect will be amusing and instructive; but if it be compared with the personalities of the previous

session, it will be found, under such altered circumstances, to breathe exactly the same spirit. There will probably be no want of charity in concluding, that whatever might have been Sir Robert Peel's course of policy, the member for Shrewsbury would have been ready to continue his personal warfare. But now the patience of the country gentlemen was fairly exhausted; they were in a rage with their former idol; and Mr. Disraeli's hits were received with roars of applause. As the House broke up that night, the smile of satisfaction might well play upon the countenance of the persevering assailant. He had won a triumph. He was gaining the command over the boisterous passions of the Protectionists.

Success stimulates orators as well as the rest of the world to exert themselves. The next time Mr. Disraeli spoke, he fairly earned the devotion of the Protectionists by defending with the utmost elaboration the "principle of Protection." On Tuesday evening, five days after Parliament had met for the session, the prime minister developed his scheme for the abolition of the Corn Laws. The Protectionist corps was then reorganised, with Lord George Bentinck virtually as commander-in-chief, and Mr. Disraeli as his master of the horse. On the 9th of February the Protectionists

moved their amendment on the motion for going into committee on the bill repealing the Corn Laws: and the great debate began. It was kept up for many nights. It became a point of honour with every country gentleman to make a speech. What deeds were done, what victories were won, only a faithful biographer, such as the literary friend of Lord George Bentinck, could record, or a still more faithful adherent to the "sacred cause" resolutely read. As the Protectionists were, on their last division in 1852, about fifty in number, and as Mr. Disraeli was himself not one of them, these long details which occupy so many pages in his political memoir, have lost much of their interest. If the unsuspecting reader could credit this history of the Protectionists, it would seem that there never were such men; and how they lost the battle after such tremendous and triumphant struggles, must remain, according to the facts set forth in the biography of their chief, a miracle of the most perplexing nature. They were, Mr. Disraeli says, "sheep deserted by their shepherds, and just being led to the slaughter-house," when suddenly, as in the Arabian tale, they felt within them the faculty of speech. They became on the instant great orators, and in the contest against all the statesmanship of England, "carried off the prize" in every debate. The

leader of these speaking sheep, when he rose to address the House, "came forth like a lion from his lair." The barbarous shepherds did not run away after all; for the amendment of the sheep with the lion as their leader, was defeated by the great majority of 97. "Only 97," says the impartial biographer of Lord George; although this majority was much greater than the most ardent free traders anticipated; and indeed, in a calculation a few days before in the 'Times' newspaper, the expected result was twenty less than the number really turned out to be, after the three weeks' discussion.

Mr. Disraeli's speech was of course not less lengthy than those of the other champions of the cause. Throwing all his former assertions about the expediency of Protection to the winds, he gravely commenced by informing the House what was the thesis he was about to maintain. "I shall endeavour to show," said Mr. Disraeli, "that the system which is called the system of Protection is not that odious system which it has been so long assumed to be." He spoke for three hours in favour of what he now plainly called the "principle of Protection." The flourishing condition of the country, so far from proving, he said, the success of the free-trade measures adopted in 1842, was entirely owing to Protec-

tion. "I say," repeated Mr. Disraeli, "that the country is flourishing because you have given it a just, a judicious, and a moderate Protection." With an utter disregard both of the logical faculties of his hearers, and of Hansard's Parliamentary Reports, the member for Shrewsbury now argued that Mr. Pitt's commercial system, which he had so frequently said proved the Tories to be the originators of free trade, was really a system of Protection. The orator even went farther. He now, without the least hesitation, affirmed, that he had supported Sir Robert Peel's tariff in 1842, not because it carried out the principle of free trade, but because it embodied a system of "modified, just, and judicious Protection, and was in complete harmony with the true commercial principles of the country." A fair application of the principles of free trade, Mr. Disraeli said, had ruined Turkey, and the same effect might be traced everywhere. It was just as easy to say that there was a natural presumption in favour of Protection, as Sir Robert Peel had said there was in favour of free trade. Protection, so far from being the bane of agriculture, had made England the first country in the world. Mr. Disraeli had never argued that the Corn Laws ought to be maintained on account of there being peculiar burdens on land. They ought to be maintained

in order to secure a just preponderance to the agricultural interest. They ought to be maintained by Englishmen because we had a territorial constitution. "But if," said the now determined Protectionist orator, amid the cheers of the country gentlemen around him, "we must bend to a new order of things, I will strive to maintain the ancient throne and moral monarchy of England, and sooner than we should so fall, I would prefer to find those invigorating energies we should lose, in an educated and enfranchised people."

And now, after all Mr. Disraeli's vicissitudes, we behold him as the decided champion of Protection. This last speech had, as it deserved to do, entirely obtained for him one of the most distinguished positions among the lately forlorn agriculturists. They had not yet given up all hope of defeating the repeal of the Corn Laws. All chance of victory in the House of Commons was indeed over; but they cast wistful glances in the direction of the Upper House; and their journals were thanking Providence because they had still a House of Lords. A Protectionist administration they considered inevitable; lists of the new cabinet, with the places assigned to all the ministers, were handed about clubs; and to Mr. Disraeli was allotted the dignified post of Paymaster of the Forces.

But before the great measure was read a third time in the House of Commons, Mr. Disraeli played a very eminent part in several interesting little interludes. Mr. Ferrand made a speech which was really as much applauded by the two hundred and forty supporters of native industry as the member for Shrewsbury's enlightened and philosophical defence of Protection had been. Mr. Roebuck thought fit to call Mr. Ferrand to account for his fierce invectives against the manufacturers, and in doing so delivered himself of a fierce invective against Mr. Ferrand. The next evening Mr. Disraeli avenged his friend Mr. Ferrand's wrongs, and made a highly successful assault on Mr. Roebuck. He advised Mr. Ferrand to follow his advice and never abuse anybody; such advice from such a quarter was too much for the ridiculous perceptions of the House, and Mr. Disraeli's words were followed by loud cries of "Oh, oh," and shouts of laughter; but he then turned to Mr. Roebuck, accused him of perpetually offending even against gentlemanlike manners, and assailed him in his finest sarcastic vein.

When the House of Commons was going into committee on the bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws, Mr. Disraeli made an impromptu speech. He alluded to the doctrines of the political economists, and called Mr. John Mill, Mr. James

Mill. This provoked a smile; it was evident that the orator had now for the first time begun to study the economists; no traces of such studies can be discerned in his former writings or speeches. Mr. Roebuck saw an opportunity of revenging Mr. Disraeli's brilliant personal attack. A few nights afterwards, when the report of the Bill was to be agreed to, the member for Bath accused Mr. Disraeli of quoting, without understanding or without having perused the work of Mr. Mill; of having learnt the doctrines of free trade in the camp of Mr. Hume and Mr. O'Connell, and of being guilty of the grossest inconsistency and treachery. Mr. Disraeli's reply was prompt and admirable, and he managed to gain another sarcastic triumph. He did not, however, overthrow Mr. Roebuck's facts; for they were unanswerable. He even made a most important admission, which none who remembered his quarrel with O'Connell could have expected. This incautious defence of some of his former political irregularities, explains one or two unaccountable circumstances of much interest to those who have followed his political life as it has thus far been sketched.

He commenced with a graceful apology for detaining the House with a merely personal question. Mr. Roebuck must have heard some

stories of him which had not the least foundation in fact; and it was quite evident that the honourable and learned gentleman had not given the subject five minutes' attention. Mr. Disraeli, as a practical man, naturally joined a party. He had joined the party with which he was connected, because he believed that it, more than any other, sympathised with the people. He had no hereditary opinions; his were the result of his own reading and reflection: "my opinions are now," said Mr. Disraeli, "precisely the same as when I first addressed a popular assembly." Yet he had been twitted with having once been connected with Mr. O'Connell. "With that great man," continued Mr. Disraeli, "my feelings with respect to Ireland fully sympathised. What then was the error, that I, being at the time a very young man, sympathising in this with the leader of the Irish people, whom I accidentally met, and with whom I was only a very few hours, should express with frankness my sentiments to him? What wonder was it that I should thus sympathise with him? My opinions have never changed, and I have always acted up to them in my public conduct. So was it with the honourable member for Montrose, and his opinions in reference to the great autocratical party with which for some foolish reason I had a personal quarrel. It

happened that I was opposed at one election, when still a very young man, by the son of a Whig minister. I supposed that I was treated with no great respect, and the House will understand how, under such circumstances a young man will express himself in extreme phrases . . . I have long been of opinion that there is no greater opponent of democracy than a modern liberal."

Omitting altogether the personal retorts, it is instructive thus to learn Mr. Disraeli's impression of his political career down to the year 1846. After having contemplated him under such opposite circumstances, advocating such opposite political courses, and following such opposite leaders, it is highly important to find that his opinions were ever precisely the same. "My conscience acquits me," said he, in his famous letter to O'Connell in 1835, "of ever having abandoned a political friend, or changed a political opinion." He then thought the Irish demagogue an overrated personage, and indignantly denied that he had ever been one of his political followers. Now we find Mr. Disraeli speaking of the same man with the greatest respect, calling him emphatically, "that great man," and acknowledging that when he did meet O'Connell, he fully sympathised with his political

career. Yet Mr. Disraeli in 1845, as in 1835, still stoutly maintained that his political opinions were identical. He even did more than this. He admitted the very serious charge which O'Connell brought against him in former days, for denouncing, as a "bloody traitor" at Taunton, "that great man" with whom he fully sympathised. Such a contradiction as this it is impossible to reconcile.

It might at least have been expected, that Mr. Disraeli would not again change his opinion of the Irish leader. O'Connell was, of course, in 1846, a member of the House of Commons, at the head of a considerable party, and, notwithstanding his old age and his infirmities, still a formidable opponent; but Mr. Disraeli's regard for O'Connell only appears to have lasted until the hour of the agitator's death. In the Life of Bentinck, Mr. Disraeli expresses no sympathy with the political career of "that great man," but, on the contrary, stigmatises him as "the great culprit," who "escaped punishment by a quirk which only a lawyer could have devised."

The extreme phrases which Mr. Disraeli apologized for having used against the Whigs at High Wycombe, have not been brought forward in this volume. Not one sentence of his first electioneering speech has it been considered necessary to

quote. Had Mr. Disraeli only indulged in extreme phrases when a very young man, during his first electioneering contest, such an apology would have been needless. But he invariably indulged in extreme phrases. He could scarcely have been called a very young man when he wrote the letters of 'Runnymede.' He was not a young man when he first entered the House of Commons; but it is incontestable, that he always, until the year 1843, expressed himself in violent language against the Whigs; and then began to express himself in the same violent language against Sir Robert Peel. An impartial observer of Mr. Disraeli's political life may, perhaps, be of opinion, that ridiculous as the earlier portion of it may be, it is not that portion which is most deserving of reprobation.

His attacks on Sir Robert Peel, at this very time, were such as it is impossible to justify, or excuse. Even his most fervent admirer is obliged to speak of his enmity to the minister, in this session, as "gloating hatred." This vindictive antipathy, which had now taken possession of his being, induced him to forget his feud with the Whigs, and even with O'Connell, that he might, with more completeness, wreak his vengeance on the prime minister.

But he made one false step; and for a moment

was obliged to fall back in confusion. Although he had always maintained that the Whigs were tainted by having the least political alliance with O'Connell, whom he had himself so much admired, it appeared that there was nothing scandalous in the Protectionists uniting with Mr. Smith O'Brien, and the extreme Irish Repealers, who were bent on asserting the independence of Ireland by force of arms. This shameless coalition was actually carried into effect for the purpose of defeating, indirectly, the Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws, and overthrowing the Peel administration. The principal adviser of this union was Mr. Disraeli, who defended Mr. Smith O'Brien, when that ardent Irish patriot was in the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, for refusing to serve on a railway committee; and in the 'Political Biography,' Mr. Disraeli expressed his sympathy for "an unfortunate gentleman who has had few defenders." Thus the chief of Young England stretched out the hand of friendship to the chief of Young Ireland.

Mr. Smith O'Brien asked Lord George Bentinck in the House of Commons, on the evening of Friday the 24th of April, whether the Protectionists would support a suspension for three months of the Corn Laws in Ireland only. Lord George Bentinck replied that though they

did not believe the suspension of the Corn Laws would do any good to that country, still, as Mr. Smith O'Brien "reigned in the hearts of the people of Ireland," should such a measure be proposed, the Protectionists would give it their support. The members for the great towns of England and Scotland were indignant at the manner in which the interests of the people of Great Britain were overlooked, in this compact between the Protectionists and the Irish votaries of physical force. Mr. Cobden, in an able speech asserted that the Corn Laws could no longer be manœuvred with in Parliament. He showed most undeniably, that a Bill for such a purpose, unless all communication between England and Ireland could be broken off, and custom-houses erected in every port, would be ridiculous; and that as the grain which was brought to England from America must be wafted first across the Atlantic to Ireland, no portion of the empire was more interested in free trade. "But," said the free trade orator, "there is the people of England to be considered also. I don't mean the country party, but the people who live in towns, and will govern this country."

Mr. Cobden's speech was loudly cheered. Sir Robert Peel, applauded many of its passages;

but not that sentence in which it was stated, that the towns' people would govern the country. Mr. Disraeli, however, started up, and accused Sir Robert of "warmly cheering" Mr. Cobden's "neat precise definition" of the people. Such approbation, Mr. Disraeli said, was scarcely decent in one, who had been proud to lead the country gentlemen of England. Sir Robert Peel immediately sprang from his seat, and amid loud cheering, denied having applauded that particular expression.

"I totally deny it," said the prime minister.

"The right honourable gentleman," said Mr. Disraeli, in great embarrassment, "totally denies it. If he means to say that anything I stated is false, of course I sit down."

And so Mr. Disraeli sat down in no enviable mood. He had made a direct charge, and that charge had been most unexpectedly but most promptly denied. Lord George Bentinck happened not to be in the House when Mr. Cobden was speaking, but he now endeavoured to rescue his friend. Mr. Newdegate asked whether Sir Robert meant to say, that anything Mr. Disraeli had stated was false? Sir Robert replied, that no one ever heard him use the word "false;" but he totally denied the imputation which had

been made. Mr. Disraeli, on reflection, expressed himself satisfied that Sir Robert Peel had not cheered the expression; but the member for Shrewsbury showed considerable soreness at the consciousness of the dilemma in which he had placed himself by his eagerness to attack the object of his animosity. "I totally dissent," said Sir Robert, "from the principle; I don't agree in it. I don't recognise, on the part of the people of towns, any sort of right to dictate to the people of the country. And why should I cheer?" Mr. Cobden also explained that his language had been misunderstood; for he only intended to say that the majority must govern in all constitutional states, and that this majority would be found in towns.

Most men, after having made a false charge against a distinguished individual, would have sought opportunities of conciliation and kindness, rather than continue the same assaults. Mr. Disraeli did not falter in his course. Sir Robert Peel was by every means to be run down. On the third reading of the Corn Bill, Mr. Disraeli avowedly took up the cudgels in the defence of the Corn Laws. His speech on first going into committee had been a defence of Protection in general: now he spoke in favour of

Corn Laws in particular. He indulged much in statistics; and the system of cramming, which Lord George Bentinck was now adopting, may be plainly observed in this funeral dirge on the Corn Laws. He enumerated many favourite axioms, which he maintained had been given up by the free traders in the course of the discussion. Even the cry of "cheap bread" was no longer heard. He was, however, still inclined to raise that cry; for he believed that the Corn Laws did make the necessaries of life dearer; but they increased in a still greater proportion the "purchasing powers" of the multitude. He believed that when an article could be progressively produced to an unlimited extent, precisely as the demand increased the price would diminish. He believed that England was not so great a commercial country now as she had been in former periods of her history, and that she was every day becoming less and less a manufacturing nation. He believed that the English agriculturists were more intelligent and more effective than the English manufacturers.

These were sufficiently original and extraordinary opinions. They were frequently met with laughter from the free traders. Mr. Disraeli could now bear to be laughed at... But when he quoted

an opinion of Mr. Greg, whom he represented as saying, that "the English manufacturer could not maintain his ground against the foreign manufacturer, because competition was so severe;" and forgetting that he was then addressing the House in favour of protection to the agriculturists, added, "No one can say that of the English agriculturists," the absurdity was immediately evident, and the countenances of the free traders evinced their enjoyment of the ridiculous inconsistency into which Mr. Disraeli had fallen while unguardedly showing that the English farmer produced more, and wasted less, than the manufacturer of the towns.

At length, as the spirit of Protection was taking its flight from the House of Commons, he began to prophecy. The price of wheat for the future, Mr. Disraeli said, would range from thirty shillings to thirty-five shillings a quarter; three or four millions of the agriculturists would be thrown out of employment; and three hundred thousand of them, or more probably only one hundred and fifty thousand of them, find occupation in the manufacturing districts. And why? Because the agriculturists were now being deprived of protection, and going to be subjected to that competition with the foreigner, whom the logical member for Shrewsbury had, only a few minutes before, said

that the agriculturists could contend with better than the manufacturers.*

Long and wearisome details occupied two hours in delivery; but before the speech concluded the orator became animated enough, and his sentences extremely exciting. Most speakers commence in a playful or sarcastic tone, and after they have interested their hearers, gradually become more earnest and impressive, and at length, in the peroration, are most passionate, energetic, and high toned. Mr. Disraeli reverses all the rules of rhetoric. He will commence in a level and even tedious style, speak for an hour and a half in the tamest and most prosaic manner; but at the very moment when the house is thoroughly tired, he suddenly makes his sarcastic points, and finishes with his keenest personalities. It is evident that he keeps what

* "Generally speaking, I think I can show the House that there is every reason for considering the English agriculturist to be more intelligent and more effective than the English manufacturer; and I mean to prove that by the evidence of a member of the Anti-Corn Law League. What is the evidence of Mr. Greg—that evidence which most honourable members are aware of, and all have heard of? He says, speaking of the manufacturers, 'Competition is so severe, that I almost doubt the possibility of the English manufacturer maintaining his ground against the foreign manufacturer.' But no one can say that of the English agriculturist. He produces in some cases double, and in others treble, the amount that any foreign agriculturist produces from the same breadth of land. Therefore, with respect to the English farmer, as compared with the English manufacturer, I can absolutely prove that he wastes less and produces more."—*Mr. Disraeli's speech on the third reading of the Corn Bill.*

he considers the best part of his speech to the last; and this peculiarity shows how subordinate in his estimation are the most elaborate arguments to his sarcasms. The consequence is that Mr. Disraeli's failure in argument is scarcely less decided than his success in satire.

His speech on the third reading of the Corn Bill was a remarkable instance of his rhetorical peculiarities. After two hours of dry statistics and argumentative common-places, he broke out into a most bitter invective against Sir Robert Peel, and outdid even all his former efforts in vehement personality. Every hard name he could call the minister was most epigrammatically uttered. Sir Robert, amidst the applause of the country gentlemen, was denounced as a systematic traitor; and his whole political life was represented as a consistent career of perfidy. Such a scene as a grey-headed statesman being bearded and insulted in this outrageous manner, amid the cheers of the "gentlemen of England," never till that evening had been witnessed in an English House of Commons.

For thirty or forty years, said Mr. Disraeli, the minister had traded on the ideas and the intellects of others. His life had been a great appropriation clause. He had been the burglar of

others' intellects. From the days of the Conqueror no statesman had committed petty larceny on so great a scale. Yet he had told the House he did not feel humiliated. Feeling, of course, depended upon the idiosyncracy of the individual; it depended on the organization of the animal that feels. But Mr. Disraeli would tell him that the country ought to feel humiliated. Even now, the minister, faithful to the law of his being, was legislating upon the plan of another person. It was "Popkins's" plan. And was England to be ruined for "Popkins's" plan? The country would no longer endure this huckstering of a political pedlar, who bought his party in the cheapest market and sold it in the dearest. All confidence in public men was lost. The people had been debauched by public gambling; but the time would come when they would awake from their intoxication, and, in the spring-tide of their frenzy, Mr. Disraeli warned them of the end of trouble.

Lord John Russell followed. He contrasted the power of Mr. Disraeli's invective against Sir Robert Peel with the feebleness of his arguments against the measure before the House. Mr. Disraeli's talent, said the Whig leader, consisted in wrapping up his personalities in powerful lan-

guage, but he had not proved, and he could not prove, that the Bill for repealing the Corn Laws was not a good Bill.

When Lord John sat down, Sir Robert Peel rose, at nearly two o'clock in the morning. He first noticed Mr. Disraeli's attack. He felt that were he to "bandy personalities" with the honourable member for Shrewsbury, on an occasion when all people were looking forward with such anxiety to the result of the debate, he should be offering an insult to the House and to the country. He foresaw that when he determined to follow that course which his public duty dictated, he must expose himself to serious sacrifices, forfeit friendships he highly valued, and interrupt political relations in which he took a sincere pride: "but," said Sir Robert, "the smallest of the penalties which I contemplated was the continuous venomous attacks of the member for Shrewsbury." The minister also added, that if Mr. Disraeli believed him guilty of those petty larcenies of which he had accused him, it was surprising that in 1841, after thirty years' experience of his public life, the honourable member was not only prepared to give him his confidence, but also to accept office under him; "thus implying the strongest proof that any man could give of confidence in the honour and integrity of

a minister of the Crown." It was four o'clock when the prime minister sat down; and his speech was universally acknowledged to be one of the best he had ever spoken.

Mr. Disraeli started up again, and said that the right honourable baronet had accused him of being a disappointed candidate for office. There would have been nothing dishonourable, after the acknowledgments with which Sir Robert Peel had favoured him, if he had applied for office in 841. But notwithstanding all the insinuations of newspapers, and though they were repeated in the lobbies of the House, nothing of the kind ever occurred. Sir Robert Peel had now adopted these insinuations. It was true, Mr. Disraeli admitted, that an individual possessing the confidence of the government had had some conversation with him, but that conversation took place under the seal of confidence. "There was some conversation," repeated Mr. Disraeli, and the cries of "Oh, oh," began to resound, "but not at all of that nature which might be implied from the right honourable baronet's speech; and it was of the most amicable kind. A communication was made to me—probably not by the authority of the right honourable baronet—there has been some mistake, perhaps, but the whole affair is blotted from my mind. I supported the

right honourable baronet for three years, and did nothing in opposition until my constituents called upon me to oppose the free trade measures of the government. Being thus called on to express my opinions, I gave a silent vote against their policy, and afterwards took a more open course. There was a line between private and public communication. It is possible that if, in 1841, I had been offered some slight office (for that was all I could have expected) I should have accepted it. But I am very glad now, that I did not."

Sir Robert replied, that he had said nothing about Mr. Disraeli's motives. "I said," the prime minister reasserted, "that, if he, on reviewing my political life in 1841, which then extended over a duration of thirty years, really believed that I deserved the character he gave me to-night, he was not right in 1841 in accepting me as a leader. I repeat, that it was intimated to me that the honourable member was not unwilling to give that proof of his confidence in me as a minister, which would have been implied by his acceptance of office."

Sir Robert Peel's reply was received with loud cheers, and Mr. Disraeli's explanation was not thought satisfactory. It was, in fact, no explanation at all; it established nothing in opposition

to the minister's statement; it was decidedly at variance with some undeniable facts, and so far as it had an intelligible meaning, confirmed Sir Robert's accusation.

Mr. Disraeli had publicly arraigned the minister that evening, as guilty, for thirty or forty years, of systematic treachery. Examining Sir Robert Peel's political career, he had declared that it was a consistent course of "petty larceny on a great scale." Sir Robert replied, if this had been so long Mr. Disraeli's opinion, he ought not to have accepted him as a leader in 1841, still less ought he at that time to have been prepared to unite his fortunes with him by taking office in the Conservative ministry. Mr. Disraeli, while denying that he had directly applied for place, admitted that he had acknowledged Sir Robert as a leader, and that even had the minister offered him a situation in the government it would have been accepted. But his reasons for opposing Sir Robert Peel were still more extraordinary; for he did more than merely accept him as a political leader in 1841; he said then that Sir Robert Peel was a man who always acted up to his professions, and never changed his opinions. He had ostentatiously professed the most boundless confidence in the right honourable baronet. He had dedicated a political work to him; he had ad-

dressed to him the most extravagant panegyrics; and now he turned round and said, that in reviewing Sir Robert's political life, he had always been consistently guilty of perfidy and intellectual burglary. Mr. Disraeli owned that he had supported Sir Robert until his constituents had called upon him to oppose the minister's free-trade measures; but that he had then felt it his duty to go into opposition. If Mr. Disraeli did support the minister's free trade measures till his constituents called upon him to oppose them, as he now said, for the first time, he supported them, it must be believed, because he considered them beneficial. What can be said of a man who sacrifices his own convictions to the demands of his constituents, and then overwhelms the minister with personalities for taking that course which he himself thought right?

Mr. Disraeli really did just the reverse of his representation. Instead of obeying the wishes of his constituents, and opposing the free-trade experiments, he supported them on great political and party grounds, argued that free-trade principles were genuine Tory principles, and, as it has been shown, told the House of Commons in 1843, that when his constituents murmured at him for being a free trader, he had gone down to Shrewsbury, ex-

plained the English history to them, and made them all free traders. Mr. Disraeli then declared that his reason for opposing Sir Robert Peel, was not on account of his commercial, but of his Irish policy. This has all been impartially and clearly pointed out in former chapters of this book; and few people could ever expect to see a politician, even amid the break-up of parties in 1846, give two such contradictory versions of the same facts. He of course might do so without much fear of confutation, for his career in 1843 had excited little attention, and people did not then trouble themselves about his political opinions, or his motives for action. But all who have studiously traced the course of his conduct, through session after session, must be thunderstruck at this glaring contradiction.*

* At the beginning of the session in 1844, Mr. Disraeli said, "He had the honour to represent the oldest Tory constituency of the country, and had already succeeded in weeding from their minds some most inveterate Whig prejudices. Last year, for example, when he was told that he had lost his seat, because he had supported the right honourable gentleman's tariff, he went down to see his friends in the country, and explained the history of England to them; and he could assure the House that, after that, they took the most enlightened views of the subject, and were proud to recur to the old Tory principles of commerce." Contrast this language with Mr. Disraeli's words in 1846, as they are alluded to in the text, and faithfully recorded in Hansard and in every newspaper report. Mr. Disraeli now said, "He supported the right honourable baronet for three years, until his constituents called upon him to oppose the free-trade measures of the government. Being thus called upon to express his opinions, he gave a silent vote against their policy, and afterwards took a more open course."

It was neither Sir Robert Peel's free-trade measures, nor his Irish policy, which induced Mr. Disraeli to go into opposition. He had supported both the one and the other. Until some more satisfactory reason can be given, we must conclude that other considerations had more to do with this memorable hostility than any question of principle. That hostility might now be thought to have reached its climax. Mr. Disraeli could scarcely go further; stronger language he could not use; his "gloating hatred" could hardly be more intense. Humiliating as was the spectacle witnessed on the evening of Friday, the 15th of May, on the third reading of the Corn Bill, another spectacle, still more humiliating, was yet to be seen. Dark as the scene was, a darker yet remains, and it is one in which Mr. Disraeli figures with quite a peculiar glory.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Disraeli must now be considered as successful in the efforts he had made so perseveringly for nearly three sessions to incite the Conservative party against their respected leader. The fierce attacks on the minister had all been directed to this object. It was necessary, however, that the disruption which had taken place should be maintained. The breach must be widened. The opportunity must not be lost. While the iron was hot, the blow must be struck, that the minister might be driven from power, and the quarrel between him and his former adherents rendered irreconcilable.

During the Whitsuntide recess, this design gave Mr. Disraeli and Lord George Bentinck much anxiety. The revelations in the 'Political Biography,' if they do not make the Pro-

tectionist leaders appear in a very heroic light, have certainly the charm of a most bewitching simplicity.* Even Rousseau, in his 'Confessions,' could not be more candid than Mr. Disraeli is in some passages of the 'Political Biography;' and they deserve to be called the 'Confessions of the Protectionists.' We are informed that the reason why a direct vote of confidence was not proposed, was, that it probably would not have been carried; and that had Mr. Disraeli and Lord George joined issue with the minister on the question of the Sugar Duties, instead of the administration being defeated, there would have been "a *painful* resuscitation of the old Conservative majority of 96." There was only one question on which Sir Robert might fairly be overthrown. As soon as the holidays were over, the ministers, it was understood, were resolved to proceed with the Irish Coercion Bill. The Protectionists must be induced to vote against the second reading. This course was not free from objections, for the party had, with Lord George Bentinck, voted for the bill on the former decision. But a choice of evils was all that remained. Mr. Disraeli had abstained

* "How was Sir Robert Peel to be turned out?

"Here was a question that might well occupy the musing hours of a Whitsun recess."—*Lord George Bentinck: a Political Biography*, p. 230.

from voting, and now set about convincing his friends, that if they lost this opportunity, all their opposition to Sir Robert might be of no avail. To persuade the country gentlemen to vote against the second reading was not, however, very easy; for Tory country gentlemen have always had a passion for coercion bills, and to vote against one, seemed to them little short of Radicalism. But now Lord George and Mr. Disraeli went about to every individual Protectionist, and terrified each ardent supporter of the Corn Laws by informing him, that if this opportunity were lost, the traitor would be in for ever.

It was long before the final resolution was taken; on the very evening when the debate began, it was not known what course affairs might take. At length, Lord George Bentinck rose and made a most violent speech, not only against the bill, but against Sir Robert Peel and all his supporters. Why that noble lord used such extreme language in condemnation of a measure which he supported a few weeks before, was, until the publication of his memoirs by Mr. Disraeli, to many people quite unaccountable. He was far from being so violent even in his speeches against the great free-trade measure, which had just been sent up to the Lords; and even during the recent discussions, while opposing Sir Robert Peel, he had

spoken of the minister as "my right honourable friend." Now, however, he declared that "the sooner they kicked out the ministers the better," called them "renegades," and "paid janissaries," and accused Sir Robert of having hunted Mr. Canning to the death in 1827. Extraordinary as the tone of this speech was, it is now, thanks to Mr. Disraeli, no longer inexplicable. It appears that Lord George determined to exhibit himself in the interesting character of an avenger of his illustrious relative, whom he believed a political rival had hunted to death nineteen years before, only for the purpose of pledging his followers deeply to vote against the ministers, and to encourage Lord John Russell to be decided in his opposition.* Thus the most malignant and unfair attack to which any minister was ever subjected, and all the virtuous indignation of which Mr. Canning's memory was made the pretext by Lord George Bentinck, and still more by his friend, arose through a petty party

* The confidential conversation Mr. Disraeli gives is indeed significant and curious. Bentinck whispered to his friend, after an interview with one of their trusty followers—"There are no means of calculating at this moment how our men will go; but he agrees with us: it may be perilous, but if we lose this chance the traitor will escape. I will make the plunge as soon as I can. There is a rumour that Lord John is hardly up to the mark. I suppose he has heard that our men will not vote against the bill. *Now, if I speak early and strongly it will encourage him to be decided.*"—*Political Biography*, p. 248.

manœuvre. Sir Robert Peel's character was to be blackened, and his life represented as infamous, that the Protectionists and the Whig leader might not hesitate to vote against the Coercion Bill. Such a confession was only wanting to render the "Canning episode," the most scandalous debate in the political history of England.

Lord George Bentinck confined himself to the general accusation, that Sir Robert Peel, "after chasing and hunting an illustrious relative of mine to the death," on account of a difference of opinion on Catholic emancipation in 1827, had afterwards told the House that in 1825 he had communicated to Lord Liverpool his change of opinion on this important subject.

Sir Robert Peel, when speaking on the Coercion Bill, noticed Bentinck's charges. He said that it was scarcely to be tolerated that such men as Lord Francis Egerton, Mr. Wilson Patten, Mr. Escott, and Mr. Goulburn, should be branded in the House of Commons as "paid janissaries," and "renegades," because they had felt it their duty, in the exercise of their right of judgment, to change their opinion on the Corn Laws. What position did Lord George Bentinck himself occupy with regard to the very measure before the House? He had voted and

spoken for the first reading. He was now changing his opinion on the second reading. Such language must create unmitigated disgust. Sir Robert Peel was glad he had not replied to this personal attack, on the moment; for it referred to circumstances which occurred nineteen years ago, and of which he could not remember exactly every detail. Lord George Bentinck was certainly old enough to remember these affairs; and he was, as he had told the House, in Parliament at the time. Sir Robert Peel respected the feelings of a man who was indignant because his relation had been chased and hunted to death. But how came it, that though Lord George Bentinck had been a member of Parliament since 1826, he only now gave utterance to his feelings in June, 1846? How came it that during the nineteen years since he first believed this murder to have been committed, he had been the political follower of one whom he now accused of murdering his relative, but whom he had, until very lately, called his "right honourable friend?" Even though the fact were correct, how, on the principles of common fairness and justice, could it be explained, that Lord George Bentinck had never given the least public or private intimation of entertaining such sentiments, or had made any attempt to ascertain the

truth of such a serious charge? That the accusation was true, Sir Robert utterly denied. He was appointed Secretary of State for the Home Department in 1822. In 1825 he was left in a minority on three different questions, all relating to the Roman Catholics. He then wished to retire, but at the request of the prime minister, who fully agreed with him, and represented the necessity of having the Home Secretary in accordance with the First Lord of the Treasury, he continued in his situation until a new Parliament had an opportunity of expressing its opinion on the Roman Catholic question. Surely it was not an enviable situation for the minister, who was responsible for the government of Ireland, to be placed in a minority on such a question by his own colleagues. The only assistance he received, in this embarrassing position, was the sympathy and cordial support of the Earl of Liverpool, the prime minister. When that minister died, affairs had a very different aspect. Sir Robert told Mr. Canning that he had no alternative but to retire. Mr. Canning agreed fully with Sir Robert Peel's motives, paid the highest tribute to his purity, candour, and disinterestedness, and hoped that their separation would only be for a time. In 1828, the Duke of Wellington was called to

power; all Mr. Canning's friends became members of the government. Had Sir Robert Peel been guilty of such a crime, would these high-principled statesmen have consented to become his colleagues? The charge was utterly destitute of foundation, and the accusation that he wished to rob Lord John Russell of the glory of settling the question of the Corn Laws, was equally unfounded. "I declare," said Sir Robert, in conclusion, amid enthusiastic cheering, "that an imputation to me of motives so base, would be as foul a calumny as a vindictive spirit ever dictated against a public man."

The prime minister's defence was made on the evening of Friday, the 12th of June. It was understood that this was the last notice he would ever take of the rancorous attacks which had been made upon him in the course of this stormy session. It was understood that he was conscious of the impossibility of carrying on the government, and had chosen this Irish question as the one on which he was to be defeated, and to take a farewell of official life. Thus he consulted at once his dignity and his consistency. The men who had most violently accused him of inconsistency would now be seen voting against the second reading of a Bill which they had supported on the first reading, and they who had done all they

could to delay the measures of the government during the session, would now be seen upbraiding the minister for the very delay of which they had themselves been the cause. Sir Robert's speech was thought conclusive, and the final battle-field of his ministerial career well chosen. He breathed the spirit of an old Roman senator; welcomed the blow that was to put an end to his official existence; and gathering his mantle around him, smiled disdainfully upon his vindictive foes. He said while the Bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws was in progress through the House: "I know the penalties I incur. I know that the course I am taking must involve the loss of power; but only pass this Bill, and then unite on any question you please, and you can drive me from office. I, for one, will be satisfied." And now the hour was approaching. All that the discordant elements of opposition were waiting for, was the announcement that the Bill had passed through the House of Lords, and this was openly admitted to be the signal for the last and irresistible charge.

The debate was adjourned till the Monday night, when, to the astonishment of the House, after Lord John Russell had spoken against the Irish Coercion Bill, Mr. Disraeli presented him-

self, and in a most elaborate speech undertook, by quotations from newspapers, volumes of parliamentary debates, and quarterly reviews, to substantiate Lord George Bentinck's original accusation. The pretence which the orator made was, that it was his duty to vindicate his friend. But every one was conscious that it was a systematic attack of Mr. Disraeli himself on the minister, and not a mere vindication of Lord George Bentinck. The accusation that Mr. Disraeli's noble friend had made did not occupy five minutes in delivery. Mr. Disraeli's professed defence of Bentinck took up two hours, and was expressed in the most acrimonious language. He represents himself in the 'Political Biography' as being supplied on the Monday morning, with the materials for the defence by Lord George Bentinck, and that he was thus speaking like a lawyer from a brief. But it is doing Mr. Disraeli no injustice to believe that he was the original instigator of the attack, and that he was more likely to supply Lord George Bentinck with literary documents, than Lord George to supply them to a professional literary man, and a regular political student.

He commenced, according to his usual custom when going to make a fierce assault on the devoted minister, by some well-turned compliments to

Lord John Russell. He regretted that the fate of the ministry was to depend upon an Irish subject, though this question had, as he owns in the 'Political Biography,' been chosen by himself; disclaimed all intention of making a party motion, though it was on party grounds only that the opposition of the Protectionists, who had supported the first reading of the Bill, could be excused; and severely censured the government for their delay in moving the second reading of the Bill six weeks after it had been introduced, though in the Memoir of Bentinck, all the efforts of Lord George and his followers to keep the business of the House at a "dead lock," is so exultingly recorded. He declined entering into the merits of the Bill itself; but expressed his conviction that there was no more foundation for many of the allegations by which it had been advocated, than there was for the famine in Ireland. He said Lord George Bentinck opposed the Bill, because he had no confidence in the government; but no public man had ever acted with such scrupulous fairness towards any ministry as his noble friend had done to that of Sir Robert Peel. Lord George was guilty of no inconsistency. He had practised no duplicity. He had violated no confidence. He had betrayed no trust. Sir Robert Peel, and not

the noble lord, had violated every principle of political morality, and outraged the faith of England.

Mr. Disraeli undertook to defend Lord George, who had been attacked, he said, by the minister, and endeavoured to make it seem that it was the noble lord who, in accusing Sir Robert Peel of hunting his relative to death, and of being only supported by "seventy renegades," and "forty paid janissaries," was now really on the defensive. Lord George had been lectured by the Secretary at War for using opprobrious language. It so happened that Mr. Disraeli could quote expressions of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox, much stronger than any which his noble friend had ever used, and in which the very word "janissary" occurred. As Mr. Disraeli was making his quotations, Lord George Bentinck cried out loudly "Hear, hear," at the end of each sentence, and seemed quite delighted with the vindication of his friend; but surely, if Lord George in his profound knowledge of parliamentary history, had given Mr. Disraeli these very quotations only that morning, it was somewhat unusual for a member of parliament to cheer his own evidence. It was the client cheering his advocate. But the fact is, though Lord George did not know it, he was only in the position of one of Mr. Disraeli's own heroes, who are

represented acting as the brilliant author himself would have done, and are the exponents of his sentiments.

Feeling that his defence had thus far been satisfactory, Mr. Disraeli in a burst of oratorical triumph said, "It comes to this; we are to be lectured by the Secretary at War;" and continued: "I now approach a subject, I confess, of a very serious kind, and one to which I cannot allude without unaffected pain." A loud burst of derision greeted this sentence. Mr. Disraeli saw that he had made a slip, and began to hint that it was not pain on account of Sir Robert Peel, but on account of Mr. Canning, for whom his sympathies were awakened, and against whom that "miserable sneer" had been directed.

He then delivered an overwrought panegyric on Bentinck. Lord George, it appeared, was a very ill-used man. He had been thrust into the position of the leader of a party against his own inclinations, and notwithstanding all his efforts to remain a private gentleman. He had always told them, "I am no ripe scholar; I am not a practised statesman; I was bred a soldier: cannot you get some one else?" What self-sacrificing patriotism was here shown! What a distinction for Mr. Disraeli to be the friend of such a man! What a confession, too, of the for-

lorn condition of the Protectionists, that they could not "get some one else," and, therefore, were obliged to press Lord George Bentinck into their service! If the orator's admiration of his noble friend had not carried him far beyond the bounds of discretion, he might perhaps have reflected that there must be something radically wrong in that "sacred cause," since, on his own admission, it had been abandoned by every experienced statesman, and was left to the undesired advocacy of a man without ambition, without any oratorical or ministerial pretensions, and whose recommendations, according to Mr. Disraeli, were, that he spoke from the heart, and was vigorously and honestly brave.

This extreme eulogy of Lord George Bentinck in his own presence was only comical. But it was the prelude to a very serious political tragedy. It soon appeared for what reason the compliments to Lord John Russell, and the hyperbolical praises of Lord George Bentinck, had been given. The orator's design had been to make his invective against the minister more effective. He accused Sir Robert Peel of wantonly suppressing the truth, and of quoting a garbled and mutilated extract from the speech of 1829. The minister's statement omitted one important sentence, which, though not to be

found in 'Hansard,' was in the 'Mirror of Parliament.' That important passage was:—"I stated to the Earl of Liverpool that in consequence of the decision against me by the voices of the representatives of that country, something respecting the Catholics ought, in my opinion, to be done, or that I should be relieved from the duties of the office I held, as it was my anxious wish to be." This, however, Mr. Disraeli said, was only the commencement of his proof against Sir Robert. Though gentlemen might alter their own speeches, they could not alter the answers to them; and in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' though not in 'Hansard,' was an answer by Sir E. Knatchbull, the leader of a party which had also been betrayed, to the very passage which the minister had left out of his quotation. And when Sir Robert had risen to reply to that gentleman, he, in 1829, by not noticing that serious accusation, had virtually admitted his guilt; and now, in 1846, he had attempted to vindicate himself by quoting a report which Mr. Disraeli thus proved to be incorrect. But this was not all. He had a right to state that the report in 'Hansard' was corrected by authority; for there was a note at the beginning of it in these words:—"Inserted with the permission and approbation of Mr. Secretary Peel."

The evidence which Mr. Disraeli thus produced, piece by piece, was hailed with frantic cheers by the Protectionist country gentlemen. Maddened by their party quarrel, they never thought for one moment, that in applauding this direct attempt to cover with dishonour their lately revered leader, they were cheering an effort which, were it successful, would not set the mark of infamy on Sir Robert Peel alone; but that the honour of England, and most especially the fair fame of these gentlemen of England, of whom he had so long been the chief, would be involved in the disgrace of the leading statesman of the age. They never reflected that, when the rancorous passions of the hour were no more, not only the orator who made this malignant attack, but those who cheered it also, would be condemned by an indignant posterity, who would ask what had become of the highmindedness of English gentlemen? And how could they bear, not only to sit by patiently and witness such an exhibition of malevolence, but also applaud every pointed period, and exult at every cruel inference which the orator made with such cold and passionless malignity, for the purpose of wounding that great minister whom they had until this session so much loved and honoured?

The callous manner of the accuser in giving utterance to his sarcasms and invectives, more even than the artful misrepresentations by which such heavy charges were implied, was the painful feature of this heart-rending scene, to all in whom political partisanship had not extinguished the common feelings of humanity. It was piteous to watch the expression on the countenance of the illustrious victim, as the orator went on with all the coolness of a dissecting surgeon in probing the heart of his subject, to brand the foremost of living public men as a monster of iniquity.

When the tremendous cheering of the Protectionists at the announcement that the report in 'Hansard' had been revised by Sir Robert Peel, had ceased, Mr. Disraeli calmly resumed his speech, and informed them that the report in the 'Mirror of Parliament' was made by a Mr. Barrow, "one of the first short-hand writers of the time." But. not satisfied even with this overwhelming evidence, he had referred to the 'Times,' and the report of the minister's speech in that journal contained the very passage which had been omitted in 'Hansard.' Again the cheering from the Protectionists was renewed, and was kept up for two minutes. "After this," said the speaker confidently, conscious that he had thrust

his poisoned rapier to the hilt, and reached the soul of his antagonist, "I think it is unnecessary to offer any more evidence. I have accomplished the vindication of my noble friend, who had not the power of speaking again in the debate." However, he still continued addressing the House; not, as he said, to offer more evidence, but to communicate some significant facts in confirmation of his statements. In the 'Edinburgh Review' of 1829, there was an article on the Roman Catholics, written by an eminent politician. It was affirmed in this article that, when Sir Robert Peel told Mr. Canning that he differed from him on the Roman Catholic question, he had a letter in his desk in which he had stated to Lord Liverpool, two years before, that the Catholic claims must be granted, and proposed that in the meanwhile, he should retire from office. Mr. Disraeli read the passage, and the cheering was again very loud; but when he added that the article had been read in the best society, and had never received any contradiction, the hurrahs of the Protectionists were quite tremendous. Then, Sir Robert Peel had said in reply to Lord George Bentinck, that Mr. Canning had expressed himself fully satisfied with his rival's disinterestedness. Mr. Disraeli endeavoured to do away with this undeniable fact, by intimating that Mr.

Canning was not sincere at the time, and expressed himself shortly afterwards in strong language against his former colleague. He then recapitulated his proofs of Sir Robert having come down to the House with garbled extracts, and been guilty "of a *suppressio veri* unprecedented in debate." He concluded with some lofty sentences in praise of Lord George Bentinck, and in admiration of Mr. Canning, whom he likened, for his influence over the House of Commons, to Alexander riding Bucephalus. This ambitious metaphor in the inflated language of Mr. Disraeli's earlier days, excited a laugh even at such a serious time. He gravely reprehended the laughter, and ascribed it to a degeneracy of national spirit; nor was he surprised at such degeneracy "when the vulture ruled where once the eagle reigned." And giving full vent to the animosity which for the sake of decency he had been obliged in a measure to suppress, he in conclusion attributed the Irish difficulty of Sir Robert Peel entirely to his treatment of Mr. Canning; and with intense bitterness ejaculated, "The right honourable gentleman must feel at the present moment when we are about again to divide on an Irish question—a division which may be fatal to the endurance of his power, he must feel that it is a Nemesis which dictates this vote and regulates this decision, and

that it is about to stamp with its seal the catastrophe of a sinister career."

Sir Robert Peel rose, and while owning, with much emotion, that having already spoken in the debate, he had no right to reply, still, as this was a purely personal question, he desired the House to suspend its judgment. The question turned upon a single fact: did he, or did he not, say to Lord Liverpool in 1825, that his opinion on the Catholic question was changed, and that it ought to be settled? He reasserted that the report he had quoted from was correct, and the representation he had given, true. The fact that in 1826 both Lord Liverpool and himself expressed themselves most strongly against conceding the Catholic claims was utterly inconsistent with the accusation that he had changed his opinion in the preceding year, and had communicated this alteration of his sentiments to the prime minister. In 1827 and 1828 he continued the same course of opposition. And he was now called upon to reconcile a contradiction in a review published seventeen or eighteen years ago. Lord Liverpool, too, was the friend of Mr. Canning quite as much as the friend of Sir Robert, and had this change of opinion on the part of the Home Secretary occurred, Lord Liverpool would have informed Mr. Canning

of such an important fact. What public man would say that it was necessary to answer an assertion in a review? "If such a letter exists," said Sir Robert, "I challenge its production. I will go further, and pledge my honour that if the letter was written, and I have a copy of it, that copy I will *in extenso* give to the House."*

Some days necessarily elapsed before the prime minister could reply to the grave charges of falsehood and dishonour which Mr. Disraeli had so unscrupulously made. A great statesman, at the head of a government, was never before placed in such an extraordinary position by a political opponent. A few words in the report of a speech delivered seventeen years before, and a sentence in a review written by one of his adversaries, were all the foundation for these heavy accusations brought forward without the least notice, in a debate on the Irish Coercion Bill of 1846. The sympathies of the public were most honourably on the side of the minister. A cry of indignation arose from every part of England. The objectionable words themselves were eagerly criticised; and it was found that even had

* According to the biographer of Lord George Bentinck, these observations of Sir Robert Peel, immediately after Mr. Disraeli had sat down, "were deprecatory and feeble." Few people who read them will be of that opinion.

Sir Robert Peel spoken them, and had Mr. Disraeli's allegations and quotations been in every respect correct, standing alone without his malignant inferences, they really established nothing. Supposing Sir Robert had said in 1825 that "something must be done" for the Roman Catholics, surely that "something" could not mean everything, and it might mean anything. He was Home Secretary; Ireland was in a state of great agitation; those who opposed the Roman Catholic claims were in a minority in the House of Commons; Sir Robert's own colleagues voted against him; there was nothing worthy of the name of government in Ireland; most unquestionably "something must be done." But it did not follow that this "something" meant that all the Roman Catholic disabilities were to be immediately removed. Yet it was only by such an interpretation that the charges of Mr. Disraeli could be substantiated, and his pious indignation justified; for Mr. Canning was in favour of granting all the demands of the Roman Catholics, and was prepared to do everything. The sentence in the review was still less satisfactory. How could any political opponent know what letters Sir Robert Peel had in his desk? No document was brought forward; not the shadow of evidence was given;

and even Lord George Bentinck himself acknowledged that the quotation from the review had nothing to do with the question.

But not only did Mr. Disraeli's extract from the 'Mirror of Parliament' not bear out the charge he had founded upon it, but he did not even give it correctly. As he read it to the House, the important sentence was in these words: "I stated to the Earl of Liverpool, that in consequence of the decision against me by the voice of the representatives of that country, the time was come when something respecting the Catholics ought, in my opinion, to be done, *or* that I should be relieved from the duties of the office I held, as it was my anxious wish to be." Now, the last member of the sentence commences with *and*, and not with *or*, in the 'Mirror of Parliament.' The substitution of one simple monosyllable for another entirely altered the meaning of the quotation. Whether this was done designedly or not, there can be but one opinion on such an inaccuracy in a man who was making a charge affecting the honour of an eminent individual; for it was only on such a similar inaccuracy, seventeen years before, that the attack against Sir Robert was grounded. What would Mr. Disraeli say, if, seventeen years after this debate, an attack were to be made upon him for having

misquoted the sentence on which he based his deliberate accusations?

But he was guilty of more than one misrepresentation; as was pointed out even before Sir Robert Peel, effectually demolished that artful and malicious fabrication. Nay, only in 1844, in reviewing that minister's career, Mr. Disraeli had acquitted him of the very charge which, with all the ingenuity of a nisi prius advocate, he had at this time endeavoured to establish. So recently as in the pages of 'Coningsby,' Mr. Disraeli had said: "It may not only be a charitable, but a true estimate of the motives which influenced him in his conduct towards Mr. Canning, to conclude, that he was not guided in that transaction by the disingenuous rivalry usually imputed to him."* After this strong declaration, he now attempted, in the face of the House of Commons and the country, to brand Sir Robert Peel with guilt, and, though the reputation of a great minister was involved in the truth of the charges, he did not even state facts fairly.

The attack was made on Monday night: it was on the Friday evening when Sir Robert Peel vindicated himself from the misrepresentations. The House, he said, had generally acquiesced in his appeal to suspend its judgment. Every

* Coningsby, book ii., chap. i.

one had seen under what disadvantages he laboured, in defending himself from accusations which might have been made at any time during the last fifteen years, when the evidence must have been much stronger, and the means of defence more perfect, than it could be after such a considerable interval. Since that time there had been great political excitement, and great political conflicts; yet never had a political opponent thought of making the events of 1827 and 1829 a subject of recrimination. All the documents relating to that period had been sent to a distance from London; all the private secretaries of those times had passed away; the correspondence had to be examined by those who had no hand in conducting it; and for three days he had now been engaged in collecting materials, and collating newspapers, for the purpose of establishing his defence against charges of falsehood and dishonour.

After stating clearly and precisely the nature of the accusation, he showed that he never expressed himself so strongly against the Catholic claims as in 1825, and how unlikely it was, that, in contradiction to his own speeches in the House of Commons, he should have gone to Lord Liverpool, and told him that his opinions were changed. He read letters from Lord Liverpool in the March, May, and September of 1825, all conclusive

against the idea of Sir Robert Peel having, during that year, informed the prime minister of any alteration of sentiment with regard to this great public question. He then noticed the charge of having read a mutilated and garbled report of the speech in 1829, and proved that Mr. Disraeli's assertion of there being two independent authorities, the 'Times,' and the 'Mirror of Parliament,' which contained the sentence omitted in 'Hansard,' was quite erroneous; for that the reports in the 'Mirror of Parliament' were really prepared from a careful collation of the reports of the different newspapers, and that, though Mr. Barrow was the editor of the 'Mirror of Parliament,' he was not the reporter of that particular passage. It was only found in the 'Times,' and had been engrafted from the 'Times' into the 'Mirror of Parliament.' But Mr. Disraeli, as a man of discretion, represented himself as not wishing to prefer a charge on one single report; and as carefully collating and comparing other reports, and finding that the report in the 'Times' confirmed the report of the 'Mirror of Parliament,' concluded that there was no occasion to bring forward any more evidence.

"But observe," said Sir Robert, with the full sympathies of the House, and the most vociferous cheering of all but a few of Mr. Disraeli's

friends, "as you have had the discretion to refer to the report in the 'Times,' and have informed the House that it is concurrent with that in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' had you the discretion and justice to examine other reports also? There were other morning papers at that time for which there were separate and independent reports, and, as you had the discretion to refer to one, and, finding an apparent concurrence, have informed the House of that fact; then, concluding there was no necessity for further evidence, allow me to ask if the same sense of justice induced you to examine other reports? Did you look at the reports in the 'Morning Chronicle,' the 'Morning Herald,' the 'Morning Post,' and the 'Morning Journal,' a paper which was set up to destroy the hopes of the success of Catholic Emancipation? There were four other papers; as you hunted up the report in the 'Times,' I ask the question, did you search the others? If you did, why did you not, in common honesty, admit the discrepancy they exhibit?" At this sentence, the cheering became loud and general from every part of the House, and Mr. Disraeli and Lord George Bentinck pulled their hats over their eyes, and their faces were sufficiently downcast. All their carefully elaborated sophisms were being scattered to the winds, and the malignant chain of circum-

stances was breaking link by link at the touch of Truth, in the shape of that much-injured statesman, whom they really had attempted to hunt down.

Sir Robert then read the paragraphs in each of the four different papers, and none of them contained the objectionable sentence. And this was the "concurrence of testimony," about which Mr. Disraeli had been so eloquent, and in reliance upon which he had dared to personify Nemesis directing the votes of the division, and sealing "the catastrophe of a sinister career!" But the minister's proofs were not yet exhausted. His manly defence was not yet completed.

He proved clearly that not only did Mr. Barrow not write the report in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' but that it was a complete concoction from all the five daily newspapers of the time, and that the sentence referred to was copied from the 'Times.' Then, Mr. Disraeli had said, that the speech in 'Hansard' had been "inserted with the permission and approbation of Mr. Secretary Peel," and this significant remark was received with prolonged cheering: the inference had therefore been, and was intended to be, that Sir Robert had been guilty of a *suppressio veri*, and had had a corrected report printed in 'Hansard.' Now what was the fact? The speech had

been published by Mr. Murray; it had therefore, become copyright; and there being considerable jealousy between the publishers of 'Hansard' and the 'Mirror of Parliament,' Sir Robert Peel was applied to, and he had prevailed on Mr. Murray to consent to the republication. The note was therefore only inserted to show that this speech was not published surreptitiously, nor without authority. The 'Times' reporter had therefore made the mistake; the mistake had been embodied in the 'Mirror of Parliament;' and Sir Robert was denounced as a garbler, a mutilator, a suppressor of truth, because there was a deaf reporter on the 'Times.'

Having satisfactorily disposed of the most serious arguments of the case, Sir Robert then came to the quotation from the speech of Sir E. Knatchbull. After that speech had been delivered, the Earl of Uxbridge asked why, if Mr. Peel was prepared in 1829 to grant Catholic emancipation, he did not support Mr. Canning in 1827. Now had Sir Robert Peel used such language as had been imputed to him, the Earl of Uxbridge might have easily referred to the 'Mirror of Parliament.' And Sir Robert would ask his accuser another question. In the case of the minister's own language, Mr. Disraeli had not been satisfied with the 'Mirror of Parliament,'

but had also referred to the 'Times.' Why did he not take the same course with regard to Sir E. Knatchbull's expressions? There was not one word of them in the report of the 'Times.' They were not in the 'Morning Herald;' they were not in the 'Morning Journal;' and Sir Robert had never heard them. Mr. Disraeli had professed great veneration for Mr. Canning. If he sincerely entertained such feelings, they were worthy of all respect; but if he was merely professing them for the sake of wounding a political opponent, he was desecrating feelings which were in themselves most holy.

Thus were all Mr. Disraeli's accusations triumphantly met, and Sir Robert sat down at last, amidst the most uproarious applause. Every one breathed more freely. The minister's honour had been cleared; every charge had been repelled. Whatever might be his faults, whatever might have been his treatment of Mr. Canning, it was all but universally felt that he was not guilty of the gross perfidy which Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli, seventeen years after the events, had most wantonly imputed. Even in the 'Political Biography' the friend of Bentinck is obliged to admit, but very ungraciously, that although Sir Robert may have made in 1829 a confused statement, he could not have said what

he had been represented as saying. Mr. Disraeli also admits that "never was there a more satisfactory explanation." Yet neither Lord George Bentinck nor Mr. Disraeli would admit so much in the presence of Sir Robert, after he had given this "satisfactory explanation." Had Lord George Bentinck possessed a tenth part of that "brave honesty" on which his friend had so liberally complimented him, he would at once have come forward, acknowledged that he had been mistaken, and regretted that he had ever made such accusations. He rose, and notwithstanding the indignation of the House, without establishing a single fact, again made his vindictive charges in vague but most extreme language. After he had concluded, Lord John Russell expressed his regret that Lord George had not done that which every one expected him to do; and the Whig leader, while admitting that the sentence in the 'Mirror of Parliament' had made an impression upon him at the time, now declared most honourably, after hearing Sir Robert Peel's reply, that the minister was not guilty of the flagrant offence, and that he had fully justified himself. And what did Mr. Disraeli, who, in his Life of Bentinck, acknowledges that Sir Robert could not have done that of which he had accused him, do, when all his

specific charges had been met and explained? He spoke after Lord John Russell, and maintained that the allegations were true, that they had not been refuted, and sneered at Lord John Russell for coming forward so nobly to acquit his political rival. Mr. Goulburn, Mr. Escott, Lord Sandon, Mr. Hume, Lord Morpeth, and Mr. Villiers all spoke one after the other, and severely condemned the course which Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli had taken. Thus the discussion ended; but it ought not to be forgotten.

Mr. Disraeli, in his recent work, proudly calls it the "Canning Episode," and confesses that had it not been for this personal attack, the debate on the Irish Coercion Bill could scarcely have been kept up until the Corn Bill had passed through the House of Lords. This shows how inglorious was the victory which the Protectionists were to assist the Whigs in gaining over the minister. They were obliged to wait until the measure which had been the cause of their revolt was fully secured before they could turn out the government.

The night on which they defeated Sir Robert was memorable for its dramatic incidents. It was only in the midst of the debate of this very evening, that the messengers from the Lords entered the House of Commons, and the Speaker

announced that the Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws had been sanctioned. The brilliant genius of Mr. Sheil, the delicate Ariel of political discussion, played beautifully amid the agitating storm of the political chaos. Mr. Cobden disclaimed the least intention of censuring the minister, or of sympathising with the hatred of the Protectionists, although he might be found in the same lobby with them, and by their combined numbers defeated the government.

Sir Robert was thrown out by a majority of 73. On the Monday following, in a speech which was not likely to be forgotten, he took a ministerial farewell of the House of Commons; and, such was the dispensation of a Providence, who knows and loves us better than we know or love ourselves, it was destined to be a final farewell. Mr. Disraeli having little more to say against this speech, finds that the peroration was "clumsily expressed." It might be so; but it was understood. The hard-working millions of England, without weighing sentences, knew what was meant by "abundant and untaxed food; sweeter, because it was no longer leavened by a sense of injustice." These words went to their honest English hearts; not because they were revolutionists, not because they wished to be fed at the expense of property,

but because they had long regarded the Corn Laws as "leavened with injustice;" and the bread of injustice is never sweet. They wanted no assistance from the state. They only asked a fair field for their manly English energies, and that common justice, which is truly the natural and the unalienable right of man, that natural right which no social compact, no phrases about territorial aristocracies, or the preponderance of the landed interest, can ever barter away. This right to strict moral justice, is the true birthright of the race of man in every clime, and under every form of government. It is the pearl of great price, the pure jewel of the soul which can never be lawfully pawned, and never, except under heavy penalties, even for a moment detained. Neither the barbaric tyranny of a despot, nor the still more unrelenting tyranny of a constitutional parliamentary majority, can ever render that just, which is in its nature essentially unjust.

The great evil of the Corn Laws was, that they were an injustice, a social and moral injustice, entirely beyond the general range of political questions. It was thus that such a man as Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law rhymer, regarded them; and no government can afford to despise the rage and indignation of such noble specimens

of English working men as this brave-hearted poet of the forge. For years, he, and men like him, had believed themselves to be suffering under oppression, and they pointed to the Corn Laws as authentic evidence, that the laws were made for the rich at the expense of the poor. The Corn Laws became to them a great abstract wrong; the cause of all misery, a huge devil of political iniquity. In this there was doubtless much exaggeration; but that exaggeration itself a wise statesman would consider as the effect, of which the cause was undoubtedly the peculiar injustice of the "bread tax." It was indeed a tax on the raw material of the life-blood of English working men. As long as it remained, there was a canker at the heart of society: the day on which it was repealed was a glorious day in the annals of England. And it was repealed just in time. The hearts of the multitude were regained to the state just in time. The moral health of English society was restored just in time. When the awful famine of 1847 came with such an appalling devastation; when to the length and breadth of the civilised world the sympathies of humanity were roused at the reports of the terrible dearth; when all the prejudices of race and creed were forgotten, and even the Sultan of Turkey contributed to the relief of

the people of Ireland; when too the throne of the barricades fell, and the tocsin of rebellion reverberated throughout Europe; when all law and order, all civilization and religion were threatened with destruction, and the barbarism of the Goths and Vandals was in danger of being established again in the nineteenth century; when Chartism in England was reawakened, and appealed to physical force against the reason and feeling of the country,—from the heart of every reflecting man broke forth a fervent thanksgiving that all the serious causes of discontent had been removed. Instead of exclaiming with Lord Derby, "Thank God we have a House of Lords!" we all exclaimed, "Thank God the Corn Laws were repealed!"

It was fearful to contemplate what the consequences might have been, had a portion of the aristocracy, with Mr. Disraeli and Lord Derby at their head, succeeded for yet a little while in maintaining the cause of Protection. With this conviction, however, was blended a just indignation at the outrageous manner in which Sir Robert Peel had been assailed, while conferring this great boon on his country. The wreath for having preserved his fellow-citizens, that calumniated statesman surely deserved. His policy had been crowned with success. His image was enshrined

in the hearts of the working men; and every humble artizan who subscribed his mite to the fund for the erection of a statue to the revered minister who had sacrificed his power and his party to his country, felt some part of the indignant scorn which filled the breasts of the members of the House of Commons, on the evening when Mr. Disraeli's deliberate accusations were so triumphantly refuted.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONLY one apology can be made for the disgraceful virulence to which Sir Robert Peel was exposed. All men, it may be said, are more or less ambitious; and politicians have been in all ages somewhat unscrupulous. Power has irresistible attractions; the pages of history are full of the jealousies and vindictiveness of public men. Mr. Disraeli in 1846, saw an excellent opportunity of supplanting Sir Robert Peel, and, with the great prize in view, did not shrink from employing any means by which it might be obtained. The stern moralist by his quiet fire-side may condemn such actions as have just been dwelt upon; but the man of the world can only smile at the rebuke of the moral philosopher, who really knows nothing about the busy world of which he is so fond of prating. The distinguishing trait

of this proud philosopher, according to the highest authority, is to moralize on everything and do nothing. Though the moralist may preach, and the philanthropist shudder, politicians will rise to power by unscrupulous means, the great game of politics will be played, and questionable actions will be performed as long as the world endures.

Whether such an excuse be satisfactory or not, it has been made, and doubtless will again be made. Until, however, success can sanctify every crime, until the distinction between right and wrong be erased from the moral world, every high-minded man will reprobate the shameful audacity of such apologies, and fearlessly condemn what his unsophisticated feelings at once instinctively proclaim to be immoral. One bad action is no justification for another. Precedents will not excuse immoralities. It is certain, too, that shamefully as public men have occasionally acted, Mr. Disraeli's conduct to Sir Robert Peel was altogether without precedent. Lord John Russell was correct when he reminded the prime minister, that he could not be surprised at the vindictiveness of those who, after having followed him so long, found themselves in the session of 1846, obliged to choose between their chief and their party. This is a sufficient excuse for the Protectionists as a body; but it is no excuse for

Mr. Disraeli, who had been avowedly in opposition to Sir Robert Peel for years. His conversion to Protection is found to date from the time when the minister was becoming a decided convert to the repeal of the Corn Laws. The sincere and straightforward Protectionists, who have at all times consistently adhered to their principles, were also honourably distinguished in 1846 for their respectful treatment of the statesman by whom they had been deserted. What was the conduct of such a Protectionist as the Marquis of Granby in 1846? He said that, while opposing the policy of Sir Robert Peel, he would not join in any reproaches; for he was convinced that the minister had acted from the purest, the noblest, and the most honourable motives. What was the conduct of the Marquis of Granby in 1852? He refused to vote for the principle of unrestricted competition, said that he had always contended for the principle of Protection, and that if Sir Robert Peel's policy was to be adopted by those who had so cruelly insulted him for acting on that policy, reparation was due to his memory. This was acting like a high-principled nobleman; and the Marquis of Granby was respected by every free trader in the House of Commons and in the country.

The great struggle of 1846 has now a sacred

character as we look back upon it; for the nominal leader of the Protectionists, and the great minister who, at all hazards, repealed the Corn Laws, were both soon taken from the world. Sir Robert Peel and Lord George Bentinck are no longer present with us; we survey their actions as through the past, and through all the tranquillising associations of the grave. Sir Robert Peel soon left the path of Mr. Disraeli's ambition. The leadership of the Protectionist party was at length attained, and when Mr. Disraeli determined to write the 'Political Biography' of Lord George Bentinck, it might not have been considered unbecoming in him to express his regret for his harsh treatment of that eminent statesman who was no longer on the earth, and whom the keenest politician could no longer have any motive for injuring. What made such an atonement doubly necessary, was the fact that Mr. Disraeli was soon, as leader of the House of Commons, to declare himself ready to follow that very course which he had said Sir Robert Peel was infamous for adopting.

The 'Political Biography' of Lord George Bentinck is perhaps the most artful attempt to palliate what really admitted of no palliation, which was ever composed. The history of the time is written by one of the principal actors

in it, ostensibly for the purpose of impartially showing us what kind of man Lord George Bentinck was, but really in order to triumph over Sir Robert Peel and all the politicians to whom Mr. Disraeli was opposed. The important occurrences of 1846 are misrepresented; Sir Robert Peel's statements are critically examined; and every little mistake that the minister made, most exultingly indicated. As was said, when the book was first published, by the reviewer of the 'Times' newspaper, it had the disagreeable appearance of a determination to have the last word on these dispute questions. But the work had not only the air of a wish to have the last word; Mr. Disraeli was resolved to have the last word when his great opponent was no more, and could not defend himself. Thus the author had it all his own way. The memory of Lord George Bentinck was the pretence for an attack upon the memory of Sir Robert Peel, and the noblest feelings of human nature were perverted for party purposes.

But there is not even much of Lord George Bentinck in his 'Political Biography.' It was evidently penned as a manifesto of the Protectionists, and an attempt indirectly to defend Mr. Disraeli's conduct to Sir Robert Peel. Some writers have supposed that it showed magnani-

mity in Mr. Disraeli to discontinue his hostility to this statesman after he retired from office; but it could be of no use to assail Sir Robert Peel when he occupied an independent position as a member of the House of Commons; and this memoir clearly proves that Mr. Disraeli's jealousy not only was not extinguished with the Peel government, but that it even continued after the mortal remains of Sir Robert had been conveyed to their final resting-place. There is, of course, an affectation of impartiality; but this only disguises the design with which the work is written. A chapter is devoted to a sketch of Sir Robert Peel's character, which, in some passages, cannot be considered unjust. But to satirise a statesman for many years, to enforce the most deliberate charges against his honour and truth, to misrepresent his defence even after he is dead, and then, in a chapter by itself, to draw his character at full length, and admit him to have possessed many patriotic intentions, and to have acted honestly, is scarcely a sufficient expiation for so much inveterate enmity and audacious malignity. If Sir Robert Peel was guilty of hypocrisy and falsehood, he ought not to be allowed the credit of having acted conscientiously. If he was innocent, it is not enough, after such dreadful charges of larceny, burglary, murder, and trickery,

to exclaim "Peace to his ashes!" admit that he was the greatest member of Parliament that ever lived, and that his name would never be mentioned even by his opponents, without homage. Mr. Disraeli's opposition to Sir Robert Peel was not that of a candid politician of different principles. It was not that of a Tory to a Whig, a Protectionist to a free trader. It was an intense hatred of one whom he accused of the utmost baseness which a public man could ever commit. He was a "Nemesis" contributing to the "catastrophe of a sinister career." The honour either of the defendant or the accuser was therefore implicated in the truth of these accusations, and it is impossible to acquit the one without condemning the other.

At the commencement of this 'Lord George Bentinck: a Political Biography,' there is a lofty admission of the difficulties of writing contemporary history; but Mr. Disraeli, while proclaiming that truth is the sovereign passion of mankind, expresses "his conviction that it is possible to combine the accuracy of the present, and the impartiality of the future." The question, of course, is not what human possibilities may be, but what Mr. Disraeli has himself done. How far the accuracy of the present, and the impartiality of the future is combined in the Life of

Bentinck may be estimated by a consideration of the eventful chapters on the 'Canning Episode.' Any reader may judge for himself by commencing at the 240th page of Mr. Disraeli's work, and reading on to the defeat of the ministry. It may be affirmed without fear of contradiction, that no candid person who peruses these sixty pages, whatever may be his political opinions, will conscientiously avow his belief in Mr. Disraeli's impartiality. It was truly said of Lord Bolingbroke, that, when he wrote his political treatises against Sir Robert Walpole, and so confidently appealed to posterity, he must have believed that everybody who lived in his own times was dead, or else he could scarcely have penned such obvious misrepresentations, and expected them to be received as undisputed facts. The same may be appropriately said of Mr. Disraeli when he talks of his impartiality in presenting to the world such an example of it as this political biography of Lord George Bentinck.

All the virulent phrases which Bentinck employed in the heat of these discussions are repeated by Mr. Disraeli in this work. Even the harsh words "janissaries" and "renegades" are applied again by this impartial author to the conscientious adherents of Sir Robert Peel. Every bad name, which only the fury of that great

party conflict could excuse, is found again in the pages written by Mr. Disraeli, in his quiet study five years after the fierce struggle was over, and the important actors in it had departed. Sir Robert Peel's noble speech in defence of himself is coldly and jealously scrutinized, professedly to illustrate the "admirable art with which Sir Robert Peel managed a case in the House of Commons," but really to destroy the authority of that great oration. Mr. Disraeli compliments the minister for his oratorical art, that he may with more propriety insinuate that the defence was after all, inconclusive and meant nothing. When a statesman's honour and veracity are impeached, he has something to do of more importance than merely to get up a good defence, or skilfully to dispose the parts of his speech. Sir Robert Peel on this occasion did not indulge in his habitual plausibilities. He did not become a special pleader; for he knew well that he was not speaking to the House of Commons alone, but to all England, to all the civilized world, and to all future generations of Englishmen; and that no rhetorical art would avail, if the accusations were left unrefuted. It was because he did really meet Mr. Disraeli's charges that Lord John Russell, all the honourable gentlemen in the House of Commons, and public opinion out of

doors, unanimously pronounced him not guilty. And of this Mr. Disraeli is conscious, or he would not have acknowledged in those pages that the "particular charge was without foundation;" but he is mistaken in supposing that, in paying a tribute to Sir Robert Peel's "adroitness," at the expense of his sincerity, he can blind the eyes of posterity. Either the charges were true or false. Since the biographer of Lord George Bentinck now admits them to be false, it would have been more generous in him to have forborne to sneer at Sir Robert's defence, and not have attempted to represent it as the mere triumph of a skilful parliamentary debater. The art of "damning with faint praise" is thus seen in all its exquisite perfection. While the explanation is allowed to have been most successful, by continually reminding us that the orator was carefully watching the clock during his speech; that he rivalled "Scarlett himself in the days of his nisi prius glory;" that he made a mistake in the person of Mr. Barrow; that he at one time said that the materials for his vindication had to be selected from a confused and complicated mass of documents, and at another, showed them to be in well-arranged pigeon-holes; that he pictured himself as, for three days, in the midst of his public duties, examining papers for his defence, which quite car-

ried away the feelings of his hearers, but which was evidently illusory; and that when he observed it to be exactly dinner-time, he sat down, knowing well how impossible it was for any one to revive the fight against him, Mr. Disraeli most plausibly attempts to make it appear that Sir Robert Peel's speech was a mere piece of rhetorical rigmarole. This is not said in words; but that it is the only inference a credulous reader of the 'Political Biography' can draw, none who are acquainted with the subject will deny.

But this is not the worst. Sir Robert Peel might at least have had his speech represented truly. Mr. Disraeli makes him say what he really never did say, that the defence may be thought as inaccurate as possible. It was not enough for Lord George Bentinck's biographer to be at the trouble of telling us how Mr. Barrow, whom the minister had spoken of as no longer among the living, called upon Lord George Bentinck six months after the discussion, and thus indubitably proved his vitality; but Sir Robert Peel must be represented as stoutly asserting that Mr. Barrow never was a reporter of the newspaper press, and was even unable to write short-hand. We are thus called on to believe that Sir Robert denied everything he could, without being convicted of ignorance or dis-

honesty. Mr. Disraeli's language is as emphatic as language can be. It is: "Sir Robert denied that there was any report in the 'Mirror of Parliament' at all. He said that the alleged reports of that publication, were compilations from the newspapers; he denied that Mr. Barrow wrote short-hand; he denied that he was even a Parliamentary reporter; finally, he denied that there was such a man as Mr. Barrow, for he was dead, or otherwise he should have referred to him."* Sir Robert Peel did say that Mr. Barrow was dead; but this is the only correct statement in the elaborate series of denials here recorded by Mr. Disraeli for the instruction of posterity. Sir Robert Peel never denied that Mr. Barrow was a reporter. He never denied that Mr. Barrow wrote short-hand. And though he made a mistake in saying that Mr. Barrow was dead, he had a sufficient reason for believing that assertion to be true, and was, in every respect, more accurate than his accuser, whose inaccuracies were inexcusable. Had not Mr. Disraeli, during the debate, also believed that Mr. Barrow was dead, he would in his reply have pointed out the error. It appears that Mr. Barrow was in India at the time, and only returned to England some months after Sir Robert had retired from office. It was a

* Political Biography of Lord George Bentinck, p. 277.

very simple mistake for the minister to conclude, on not finding any evidence of Mr. Barrow's existence, that this alleged reporter for the 'Mirror of Parliament' was no more. Mr. Disraeli must have considered it of immense importance to gain even so small a triumph over Sir Robert, thus to devote, years after the debate, one whole page of the 'Political Biography' to the correction of this error, and to recompense Mr. Barrow, whose feelings, it would seem, had been hurt because he had been declared no longer a denizen of this planet. But it is unpardonable incorrectness in Mr. Disraeli, even in a work which was to "combine the accuracy of the present, and the impartiality of the future," to commit, long after the event, three gross errors, while triumphing over Sir Robert Peel for making one.

That in all respects the case may be clear, it is necessary to quote both Mr. Disraeli's words and those of Sir Robert Peel as they are reported in the 'Times;' impartial people may then fairly judge between the inaccuracy of the minister and that of the author of the 'Political Biography.' It was on a simple report in the 'Times,' that Mr. Disraeli accused the minister. It is, therefore, but justice, that the reporter of that journal should be the "Nemesis" to prove Mr. Disraeli's

own inaccuracies, and to vindicate the outraged memory of Sir Robert Peel.

In the 'Times' of June the 16th there is the report of the debate of the preceding evening, when Mr. Disraeli made his accusations. Then for the first time the name of Mr. Barrow was brought into the discussion. Mr. Disraeli said, "Now I have inquired and been informed that the report I have quoted from the 'Mirror of Parliament' was made by Mr. Barrow, one of the finest short-hand writers in the country, and a man of ability and intelligence. But after all, it is Sir E. Knatchbull's speech that proves the truth of the matter, and would prevent any imputation being substantiated against Mr. Barrow's accuracy, if there was any made. But not satisfied even with this, I thought it discreet to refer to the report of the most eminent newspaper of the time—the 'Times' of the 6th of March, 1829—and there the right hon. gentleman was reported thus: 'He stated to Lord Liverpool, then at the head of His Majesty's Government, that in his opinion the time had come when something respecting the Catholics ought to be done, or that he must be relieved from the duties of his office.' Therefore, Sir, *it appears also by this report,* that in 1825, in the

opinion of the right hon. gentleman, the time had come when something respecting the Catholics ought to be done. After this, I think it is unnecessary to offer any more evidence. I have accomplished the vindication of my noble friend, who had not the power of speaking again in this debate." These are Mr. Disraeli's own words. What do they mean? That the report in the 'Mirror of Parliament' was written by Mr. Barrow, and confirmed by "the most eminent newspaper of the time."

To understand Sir Robert Peel's reply, and, above all, his expressions referring to Mr. Barrow, Mr. Disraeli's precise words must be borne in mind. The 'Times' of June the 20th contains a careful report of Sir Robert Peel's speech in answer to Mr. Disraeli. Sir Robert, in reference to what Mr. Disraeli had said about Mr. Barrow, said, "I have made inquiry, and I give the most peremptory contradiction to the statement that *the report in the 'Mirror of Parliament'* was written by Mr. Barrow. I deny that Mr. Barrow was *the* reporter at all. Mr. Barrow was the editor of the publication, and was not in the habit of reporting *for the 'Mirror of Parliament.'*" Sir Robert Peel's denial cannot surely be misunderstood. Alluding to a particular report in the 'Mirror of Parliament,'

he denies that Mr. Barrow was, as Mr. Disraeli had said, the author of it. "I deny," said Sir Robert, "that Mr. Barrow was *the* reporter at all." There is, however, not one word here which can be construed in any manner to mean that Mr. Barrow was not *a* reporter, and not able to write short-hand. Not only did the minister not say that Mr. Barrow was no reporter at all, and unable to write short-hand, as posterity is assured by Mr. Disraeli; but it can be proved, that, while Sir Robert denied that Mr. Barrow was the reporter of the speech in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' he at the same time admitted that Mr. Barrow was a "great reporter." After alluding, with becoming indignation, to the difficulty of reconciling newspaper reports of seventeen years ago, and how easily, though perfectly innocent, he might have failed in so doing, Sir Robert said, "I might have believed that the 'Mirror of Parliament,' must have had separate, independent reporters; but a sense of justice induced many gentlemen of the press, and unconnected with me in politics, to come forward and give me that information, which enables me to deny that Mr. Barrow, *a great reporter*, reported one line of that speech."*

As Mr. Disraeli now admits that Sir Robert

* Report in the 'Times' of June 20, 1846.

Peel did not in 1825 use the language ascribed to him; as he now admits that the report in the 'Mirror of Parliament' was incorporated from the 'Times;' as he now admits that Mr. Barrow was not the reporter of the sentence of which so much was made; and since he now, in direct opposition to the plainest and the most undeniable language, imputes to Sir Robert Peel expressions which were not employed, and which are directly contradicted by the report in the 'Times' of June the 20th; whether has the deceased statesmen, or his unhesitating accuser, the better claim to accuracy? The statements, then, in the 'Political Biography' are clearly erroneous. So far from saying that Mr. Barrow did not write short-hand, and was not a parliamentary reporter, Sir Robert Peel acknowledged him to be "a great reporter," though not the reporter of the speech in the 'Mirror of Parliament.' It is not, however, at page 277 only, but also at page 283 of the 'Life of Bentinck,' that Mr. Disraeli so wilfully represents Sir Robert as maintaining, notwithstanding the undeniable evidence to the contrary, that Mr. Barrow "was unable to write short-hand," and as "never having been a member of that distinguished body, the parliamentary reporters of England." Not one single expression in Sir Robert Peel's speech will allow of such an interpretation. Every sen-

tence about Mr. Barrow has just the opposite meaning to that which Mr. Disraeli has so deliberately and repeatedly given.

But this is only a single instance of the extraordinary misrepresentations which abound in the Life of Bentinck. Mr. Disraeli's old taunt, that Sir Robert was prepared to repeal the Corn Laws from the first, and prevent Lord John Russell from settling the question, is again revived, and many pages throughout the book are occupied by an attempt to substantiate it. The quotations from the speeches of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox, with the terms "janissaries," and "renegades" in them, are declared to be "far exceeding any observations of Lord George in vituperative expression;" although Mr. Fox's words only applied to some of George the Third's lords of the bedchamber, and the quotation from Lord Shelburne was a mere figure of speech, and implied no personal reproach; while the "forty paid janissaries and seventy other renegades" of Bentinck, were the leading statesmen and the most highly-respected gentlemen of England.

The Duke of Wellington is treated scarcely better than Sir Robert; and the simple, but pithy expressions of the old soldier quite distorted, in order that he may be represented as an unconstitutional dictator. Throughout the whole work,

the Duke is scarcely ever mentioned without being misrepresented. One example may be given, although there are many more of the same kind. At the commencement of the fourteenth chapter, Mr. Disraeli tells us that on the second reading of the Corn Bill in the House of Lords, the Duke of Wellington said, "that because the House of Commons had consented to the measure, there was an end to the functions of the House of Lords, and that they had only to comply with the projects sent up to them; a sentiment the bearing of which seems not easy to distinguish from the vote of the Long Parliament which openly abrogated those functions."

The Duke of Wellington expressed no such sentiment. His language was strictly constitutional, and the advice he gave the peers was wise. Lord Derby had most characteristically called on their lordships to reject the Bill without minding what might be the consequences. The Duke, in noticing Lord Derby's speech, reminded the House that the Bill had been sent up to them by a great majority, a majority consisting of more than half of the House of Commons. He advised them not to take up a position on which they could not stand, and showed that their strength consisted in being united with the House of Commons and the Crown. The very sentence from which Mr. Disraeli has extracted the concluding por-

tion, does not, even when isolated from the rest of the speech, bear the meaning he puts upon it. The Duke said, "You have great influence on public opinion; men have great confidence in your judgment, but separately from the Crown and the House of Commons you can do nothing; and if you break your connexion with the Crown and the House of Commons, *you will then* put an end to the functions of the House of Lords."* There is nothing unconstitutional, nor like the republicanism of the Long Parliament in these judicious words. They only mean what every wise statesman has said, that a House of Lords could not stand without being supported by public opinion; and that as public opinion, the House of Commons, and the Crown, were in favour of the repeal of the Corn Laws, it would not be wise in their lordships to stand alone in their opposition. If this be unconstitutional republicanism, it is exactly what Mr. Disraeli said when he appealed to public opinion, and observed that, unsupported by public opinion, the "most august political institutions were but the baseless fabric of a vision."

But in none of Mr. Disraeli's writings or speeches, until by a singular concurrence of circumstances it fell to his lot to deliver an oration

* Report in the 'Times' of Friday, May 29, 1846.

on the Duke of Wellington's death, is there any warm sympathy or enthusiastic admiration for the great Conservative warrior. He is highly indignant that the Duke should have thought himself free from the ordinary allegiance of the party politician. Such a notion he considers to be unconstitutional. But a very little reflection may convince any one that there was nothing very monstrous in such an idea. The Duke of Wellington's position was most peculiar; he was regarded with veneration by his countrymen; he was implicitly trusted by the sovereign: his influence in the House of Lords was all but absolute. Under these circumstances it will appear that the great commander was right, even though he was unconvinced of the repeal of the Corn Laws being so highly beneficial as other politicians had argued, when he determined to support Sir Robert Peel, and believed that a good administration was of more importance than his own mere individual opinion, as he so tersely said, "on the Corn Law, or any other law." The Duke was most constitutional when Mr. Disraeli depicts him as most unconstitutional; for he refused to be the mere instrument of a factious majority of the peers against the statesmanship and popular feeling of the empire.

So singular are these misrepresentations, that

unaccountable and indefensible as they are, they must be supposed to proceed from haste or want of due consideration. But not satisfied with misrepresenting the illustrious soldier's meaning, the author of the 'Political Biography' is found to be inaccurate, even in sentences which he avowedly gives as quotations. Mr. Disraeli insists that the only reason why Sir Robert Peel won over the Duke, was the representation that had he not remained in office Her Majesty must have sent for Mr. Cobden. The Duke of Wellington, we are assured, soon found that the sacrifice had been made in vain. At page 215, Mr. Disraeli quotes especially from the Duke's speech, and all who are not well acquainted with the circumstances, or have in the slightest degree forgotten them, must, of course, accept Mr. Disraeli's testimony, and believe that the venerable chief was disappointed. "And in one of the last of those strange, unconstitutional speeches," says Mr. Disraeli, "full of naïveté and secret history, which the Duke of Wellington was in the habit of addressing to the peers when his Grace led the House of Lords, he said—'That, whatever may be the result of this Bill in this House, it appears very clear that the object I had in view in resuming my seat in Her Majesty's councils will not be attained. I conclude that

another Government will be formed." What confidence can be placed in Mr. Disraeli's inferences when such plain facts as these are proved to be inaccurate? Two important passages, which quite alter the meaning of the Duke's words, are left out in Mr. Disraeli's quotation. The Duke really said—"It appears to me very clear that whatever may be the result of this debate in this House, the object I had in view in resuming my seat in Her Majesty's councils will not be attained *if your lordships reject this Bill.* I conclude that another Government would, *in that case,* be formed." *

It is an irksome task, both to writer and reader, thus to dwell on sentences of old speeches, and compare passages with each other. No author who wishes to maintain the interest of his narrative will enter minutely into such verbal inaccuracies. Yet unless such mistakes as these were fully presented, it might be supposed that the condemnation of the 'Political Biography' arose from a mere difference of opinion on the political transactions in which Lord George Ben-

* Report in the 'Times' of Friday, May 29, 1846. The report in Hansard does not contain the words which are here given in italics; but this cannot be offered as an excuse for Mr. Disraeli; as the "mutilations" he laid to the charge of Sir Robert Peel were also not in Hansard, and the reports of the 'Times' newspaper were, according to Mr. Disraeli himself, incomparably the most trustworthy authorities for what had been really spoken.

tinck and Mr. Disraeli were engaged. No general language could be so forcible as the misrepresentations themselves; but it is not necessary to give more examples. To point them all out would require the space of another volume of the same extent as Mr. Disraeli's book; for it is one great misrepresentation from the beginning to the end. Enough has been done, at least to prove to all who are open to conviction, that the memoir, which is commenced with the lofty assumption of combining the accuracy of the present and the impartiality of the future, is entirely unworthy of credit. The most decided political partisans who will not, after the evidence here brought forward, admit this, must be numbered among those individuals who, David Hume said, are plainly not to be convinced by fact or reason, and ought, therefore, to be left to their prejudices. There is no instance in all English history, until Mr. Disraeli published this work, of any politician writing in such a manner of an illustrious opponent after his death. The tomb has always been the termination of personal enmity. Even Bolingbroke did not write against Walpole after Sir Robert had ceased to be prime-minister; still less did he misrepresent Walpole's own speeches after this great Whig minister was dead. Hitherto English politicians have, as a class, had

much magnanimity. All have committed errors. Many have committed crimes. But they have seldom attempted to mislead the judgment of posterity; and when they have been conscious of their good intentions, however wrongly they may have occasionally acted, they have looked forward confidently to its ultimate verdict. Even Lord Bacon, after his humiliating conviction, could anticipate the right appreciation of future ages. He knew that he had acted criminally; but he also knew that he had been a benefactor to mankind. Never, from the time of Bacon to the present generation, has any public man attempted to defend himself and stigmatise his departed antagonist by writing the history of his own conflicts, as Mr. Disraeli has done in the 'Political Biography.' Mr. Fox would not have written thus of Mr. Pitt; nor Mr. Canning of Mr. Fox; nor Mr. Peel of Mr. Canning; nor Lord John Russell of Sir Robert Peel.

But even in the chapter exclusively devoted to the exposition of Sir Robert Peel's character, and which was intended to make amends, by its apparent impartiality, for so many years of enmity, and such serious violations of all political and literary propriety, much that Mr. Disraeli has said is open to objection. Sir Robert Peel's faults are all deduced from one great deficiency.

He was not, according to the author of the 'Political Biography,' a man of genius. He could give to his party no guiding principle, because he had none. He had no imagination, in consequence no foresight, and no creative spirit.

Mr. Disraeli evidently considers a statesman as analogous to a poet, and believes that imagination has as much to do with a scheme of policy as with an epic poem. In this opinion there is much that is fallacious. They who have least confidence in Mr. Disraeli's own political abilities would hesitate to place them on the same level with his poetical powers. It is an abuse of terms to call a scheme of policy a creation, or an eminent politician a creative spirit. When we speak of any man as a creator, we suppose him to be the producer of something that did not before exist. We cannot say that the greatest statesman creates what was not; because he has to do with the real world, and the actions and passions of mankind. Moral philosophy, and therefore political philosophy, may be in their perfection most valuable sciences; but they are in no sense imaginative poetry, nor will the organization of a great poet of necessity make a great statesman.

To show the absurdity of this idea, we have

only to look at those peculiar and gifted beings whom Mr. Disraeli really represents as creators, and from whom Sir Robert Peel is said to have borrowed his creations. They were Mr. Horner, the Duke of Wellington, Louis Philippe, Mr. Jones Lloyd, and Mr. Cobden. Now whatever may have been the great and various qualifications of these eminent individuals, it is impossible to call them "creative spirits" without being ridiculous. One and all of them were men of unimaginative minds and prosaic temperaments. They had even less imagination than Sir Robert Peel himself, and could not be thought the creators of their commercial or political principles. Surely Mr. Cobden was not the "creator" of the principle of free trade. Even though country gentlemen were the creators of the Corn Laws, Mr. Cobden did not create the principle which destroyed them. A principle never can be created. The plain meaning of the word "principle" implies that it must have always existed. A principle which was before unknown may be discovered, as a power before unknown may be discovered in the natural world; but known or unknown, every principle must have had a beginning with the world itself, or it could not be a principle. It is only with the conviction that a principle is as permanent as the moral constitu-

tion of the universe, that it can be heartily believed in by human beings. Hence all Mr. Disraeli's sentences about "creative spirits" and "givers of creeds" to a party, are founded on a misapprehension. No man ever gave a creed to a party. The creed must exist before the party: it is the creed itself that forms the party, and not the party nor the leader that forms the creed.

Sir Robert Peel was no mere aspiring egotist, believing that the world existed in order that he might be one of its greatest rulers. He considered that ministers are made for the country, and not the country for the ministers. He never imagined that he was a heaven-born politician, who was to make all other men his tools. He was not a vain man. The basis of his eminently practical character was humility, approaching rather to a want of confidence in himself than to a presumptuous belief that he was to give a creed to a political party, and that whether people would or not, they should believe in him as a human creator. Because he was so humble, because he had been strictly brought up in all the Tory prejudices of the age by a rigid father who worshipped Mr. Pitt, and because he entered public life at the time when official Toryism was rampant, and ascribing every glorious achievement to its infallible agency, he adopted all the traditions

of that party with which he was connected. His father had sworn his son at the altar of the Tory faith, and it was not until the most terrible social and political convulsions broke out, that one so humble, so practical, and so earnest, could doubt the wisdom of that traditional policy which he had been consecrated, like Hannibal, by a fond father, to carry out, in all its stern and unflinching dogmatism.

But then Sir Robert Peel's nature was sincere. As the Duke of Wellington, who knew him so well, said of him, he always spoke the truth. As he would not speak a lie, so neither could he believe one. When he had once become convinced that his ideas on the questions of his time were wrong, and that his opponents were in the right, at every personal sacrifice, notwithstanding the opposition of his nearest and dearest friends, he manfully changed his course, courted obloquy, and acknowledged his errors. Slow as he was to adopt the new opinions, there was no hesitation after they had been once adopted. He never brought forward a half measure. He never trifled with a great question. So uncompromising was his course after it had once been changed, that his opponents might accuse him of rashness, but not of ambiguity. It was not necessary to study his speeches, to be convinced there was no hidden

meaning, no reservation entirely different from the avowed purpose of his words. He did not set the moral sense of the House of Commons at defiance, nor could he even be charged with maintaining an If you think this, do this, and If you think that, do that, kind of policy.

Had he been an unprincipled man he might easily have found plausible reasons for his different courses, and have argued that he had not changed his opinions at all. He might have said that Mr. Pitt was a free trader, that Mr. Pitt was in favour of Roman Catholic Emancipation, that Mr. Pitt was in favour of Reform, and that the original Tory policy was exactly the policy which he was then pursuing. Thus, while continually changing his opinions, he might have declared that he had never changed an opinion; and while perpetually guilty of inconsistency, have affirmed that he was always perfectly consistent. But he was far above such conduct. He did not outrage the feelings and the understandings of the nation by supposing that any one could be the dupe of such artifices. Hence, though he might lose the votes of his friends, and break up his party, he could not lose the respect of those who most opposed him in truth and earnestness. His inconsistencies became illustrious: His moral character rose as they were avowed. Step by step he advanced,

and while leaving all the ruins of his former triumphs full in view, at length attained an elevation which no politician has ever occupied; his great inconsistencies were dwarfed in the presence of the gigantic expansion of his moral dignity, and all the rancorous passions of his unscrupulous adversaries fretted and fumed beneath his feet.

He was indeed the statesman of expediency in the highest meaning of the word. There is something venerable and not opprobrious in this vilified term. It has a hidden meaning of great significance. It was no reproach to a Greek statesman that he believed in fate or necessity. It was no reproach to the practical Roman politician that he followed the course which he thought most expedient for the commonweal. The truly Christian minister of enlightened Europe may, without shame, take the word "expediency" as a motto; for when rightly examined, it will be found to mean that the laws of God are stronger than the laws of man, and that the will of the Almighty is more powerful than that of any human politician. The blustering outcry of a certain class of people against political expediency, so far from proving that they have intelligible principles, proceeds from their having formed some narrow idea of the universe; and on finding that the world will not conform

to it, they are struck with horror, and hold up their hands in indignation. It would be wiser in them to reconsider their opinions, and have some salutary suspicion of their own imperfections, rather than a firm conviction that all the world but themselves are in the wrong, and that their own finite conceptions are superior to the infinite wisdom of a superintending Providence. These ready declaimers against expediency are practical atheists. Right principle and sound expediency will always harmonise, as the sound mind in the sound body. It was because Sir Robert Peel combined them, that he was more trusted than all those boasting professors of first principles, which were found to be compatible with any degree of interested latitudinarianism.

No greater praise can be given to any man than to say of him that "his mind was in a state of perpetual education." What Mr. Disraeli writes as a reproach, is in truth Sir Robert Peel's highest distinction. Men are so ready to adopt opinions in their youth, and in defiance of reason or consequences, to maintain them to their old age; we are so ready to act wrongly, and so slow to admit that we have acted wrongly—that he who can always keep his mind open for the reception of truth, and have the courage to proclaim it, though in doing so he must acknowledge the follies of his

former days, is worthy of all our esteem. Such an inconsistency is indeed most honourable. Such an inconsistency is more respectable than much consistency. Such an inconsistency is incomparably better than a consistency of that remarkable kind which allows its professor to be at one time an extreme Radical, and two years afterwards an extreme Tory; a consistency which at one time fully sympathises with O'Connell, and at another denounces him as a traitor; at one time calls him a great man, and at another a great culprit; a consistency which now admits an eminent statesman to have never changed his opinions, and at another upbraids him as guilty of forty years of perfidy; a consistency which is at one time enthusiastic for the principle of Free Trade, and at another equally enthusiastic for the principle of Protection; a consistency which, judged by action, is found to consist in nothing but keen personalities, extreme opinions, and a most uncandid inconsistency.

The warm friendship with Lord George Bentinck which amused politicians during the three years after the termination of Sir Robert Peel's ministerial career, was not the least singular of Mr. Disraeli's consistencies. The author of 'Coningsby' was a democratic Tory; Lord George Bentinck an aristocratic Whig. Common enmity

to Sir Robert Peel was almost their sole bond of union; for their political ideas could seldom agree, unless, indeed, Mr. Disraeli silently dropped all his former opinions.

Bentinck had the virtues and the vices of the patrician. His name had for many years been only known as that of the most prominent member of the sporting world. The turf with him had been a passion, and, like all his passions, was pursued on the most gigantic scale. When Sir Robert Peel abandoned Protection, Bentinck rushed to the rescue of the country gentlemen, and without the least preparation, without any political knowledge, or any oratorical accomplishment, was hailed by his friends at once the chief of the Protectionists, and the leader of the opposition. On being chosen for this responsible post, he had not even the ear of the House of Commons. With the ardour of his nature, he plunged into parliamentary committees, and determined to vindicate a foregone conclusion. Protection was with him, not a principle, but a passion. To succeed on the turf, a man must have a clear head, a knowledge of the rules of arithmetic, and a love of figures. These qualifications Bentinck possessed, and they were now turned to account in his new career. Statistics were his unfailing resource; perhaps because he remembered the aphorism of

Mr. Canning, that by statistics it was possible to prove anything. A parliamentary committee on exports and imports was to him what a betting-book had lately been. Protection was like a favourite horse; the House of Commons, the ring; and politics, a race. Day after day, and session after session, did this headstrong nobleman labour at his fruitless task; he was fighting against impossibilities, and was determined "to succeed or die." Such a struggle could, of course, only have one termination. Truth and nature are stronger than even the impetuous passions of a brave aristocrat. His constitution gave way; a pallor overspread his habitually florid countenance, and he suddenly fell dead, a martyr to the strangest cause for which a man ever died.

Had Mr. Disraeli written a few pages in memory of his friend, none could have disapproved of such a tribute. He tells us that he was often reminded, when in communication with Lord George Bentinck, of what Burke said of Admiral Keppel. But had Mr. Burke written an elaborate volume of 588 pages, and ascribed to the brave seaman all the virtues and heroic qualities of the most renowned characters, both of ancient and modern times, he would have made both Admiral Keppel and himself ridiculous. Mr. Disraeli is not satisfied that the world should

allow his friend to have been a high-spirited, though somewhat self-willed nobleman; but Lord George is to be a mighty statesman, a profound politician, one of the greatest of Englishmen. At one page he is compared to Marcus Brutus; at another we are reminded that he was scarcely older than Julius Cæsar when he commenced his career, and looked as high and brave as this great Roman hero; at another, he is said to have resembled Hampden, in having been prematurely stricken down.

No man had ever less claim to real heroism, or to real statesmanship, than Bentinck. So much was his newly-inspired zeal for public life an impulse, that the career into which he had so precipitately entered, he was with equal precipitancy, at the first moment of vexation, ready to abandon. Mr. Disraeli relates, with grave sympathy, the mortification of the Achilles of Protection, a few days before the Derby of 1848, when his resolutions in favour of the Colonial interests were negatived; and how this mortification was increased on learning that one of the race-horses he had sold in order to prosecute this public business more decorously, had won the stake, to gain which all his former life had been devoted. Lord George opened his heart to his friend, and gave a "superb groan."

But a little while afterwards, when one of his resolutions in the committee had been carried, we are told, in the spirit of Homer, that Bentinck's "eye sparkled with fire, his nostrils dilated with triumph, his brow was elate like a conqueror, his sanguine spirit saw a future of continued and illimitable success." This is not the stuff of which a great statesman is made. A steady and resolute perseverance; a temperament not to be depressed by adverse fortune, or to be much elated in the hour of success; to endure all disappointments; to sacrifice all pleasures; to forget his identity in his eagerness for the public good; to have an ardour for knowledge of every kind; neither to adopt a party rashly, nor to leave it hastily when once fairly enrolled in it—are indispensable requirements in one who would win the confidence of a great people, and be intrusted with great affairs. Bentinck was not such a man. When we now look back on these wearisome details of his scheme for the construction of the Irish railways, his opinions on the Bank Charter Act, and his labours as chairman of the committee on the Sugar Duties, it is impossible not to pity so much misplaced energy, and so much useless industry. He effected nothing for his country; he effected little for his party; but he effected much for Mr. Disraeli.

It is to Lord George that Mr. Disraeli owes his position as leader of the country gentlemen. Had it not been for Bentinck, their prejudices against their brilliant and sarcastic advocate would never have been overcome. It was as the friend of Lord George that he was first endured by them, and at length acquired their confidence. Mr. Disraeli knew his situation, and how necessary it was that he should have some influential territorial chief in the foreground, while he directed the secret workings of the machine. Lord George was just what was required. He had birth and position, and was neither an orator nor a man of letters. The harmony of these two friends was not, however, without a jar. Lord George Bentinck had strong opinions and a strong will, and was by no means prepared to play the part of a Marquis of Carabas. His temper was hasty, his prejudices were very numerous, and he was firmly attached to many of those great Whig principles which Mr. Disraeli had so frequently combated. It was dangerous to talk about the "Venetian system," and the tyranny of the great revolution families, to the son of the Duke of Portland, and the descendant of the faithful friend of William of Orange. True to the principles of his house, when the question of religious liberty was raised, Bentinck would

neither record his vote against it, nor absent himself from the division. From his determined spirit, perhaps, Mr. Disraeli borrowed a resolution which he did not always display; for it is certain that he has never advocated with so much fearlessness the cause of his race since Bentinck's death, as when it was discussed in the first session of the third Parliament of Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE triumph of the two Protectionist leaders was short lived. On the Jewish question they found themselves in opposition to their party, and Mr. Disraeli discovered that country gentlemen had a very decided creed of their own, and that it was not very easy to make them believe any other. He could not even induce Lord George to adopt his faith: for though they both voted for the admission of the Jews into parliament, they did so on very different grounds. Bentinck supported the Jewish claims on the old and intelligible principle of religious liberty; his friend, on principles peculiar to himself.

In the early works of Mr. Disraeli there are no traces of sympathy with his race. Even in the 'Wondrous Tale of Alroy' there is not a single expression from which his mature opinions may

be deduced. This is a singular fact, for in youth it might be expected that these enthusiastic feelings in which Mr. Disraeli has in later works so frequently indulged, would have the greatest influence. The very dogmatism of this Jewish theory is more characteristic of youth than of maturity; but it is developed for the first time in 'Coningsby,' and was only expounded in all its perplexing impracticability in his latest work of fiction. 'Tancred, or the New Crusade,' published in 1847, after the terrible crusade against Sir Robert Peel, was avowedly devoted to the exposition of Mr. Disraeli's "views respecting the great house of Israel." Writing in 1849, when Baron Rothschild had been elected a member for the city of London, his claims rejected by the House of Lords, and the quarrel of Lord George Bentinck and himself with the Protectionists had broken out on this question, Mr. Disraeli said that no attempt had been made to refute his views, and that to refute them was impossible. In the 'Political Biography' there is an elaborate chapter on the same subject; and when the astonished reader has concluded it, and commences the next chapter, wondering what a discussion on the different Jewish colonies, the Semitic principle, and the phenomena of race has to do among the prosaic and tedious diatribes on the

Irish Labour Rate Act and the Sugar Duties, he is still more perplexed on being informed by the biographer that "the views expressed in the preceding chapter were *not* those which influenced Lord George Bentinck." Of course they were not Lord George's opinions, but Mr. Disraeli's, which were to be dwelt upon in this political memoir.

In attempting to consider briefly the views Mr. Disraeli entertains on this much-vexed question, which is now annually discussed in Parliament, it would be unworthy of any one to indulge in sneers at the Jews, or at Mr. Disraeli for advocating their cause; though, by so doing, a writer might count upon the approbation of those who were lately Protectionists, and are still Mr. Disraeli's supporters. The question is too serious for any sincerely religious person to forget that Christian charity which all sects profess in theory and forget in practice. Perhaps, too, had Mr. Disraeli himself been duly impressed with the grave importance of this religious subject, he would not have chosen the three volumes of a fashionable novel as the fitting medium for the exposition of his opinions. Objectionable as a novel may be as the vehicle of political discussion, it is still more objectionable when the subject is theological; and objectionable as reli-

gious novels may be in general, 'Tancred,' in particular, combines all the objectionable peculiarities of Mr. Disraeli's personal and satirical fictions with the jarring incongruities of such a sacred theme. We go from one chapter where Mrs. Coningsby is spoken of as "hunting in couples" with another fashionable lady, as "having brilliant sport," and as saying many things "that would assume quite a different character were they even to fall from the lips of an Aspasia to a circle of male votaries," to Jerusalem by moonlight, with a pilgrim seeking heavenly consolation, and kneeling and praying at the sanctuary of the Holy Sepulchre. The emotions excited by such discordant scenes are singularly painful. There is a time and place for all things. But deep theology and fashionable immorality ought not to be associated together. Were it not that the author, in the first volume of 'Tancred,' dwells with such zest on Mr. and Mrs. Coningsby, and their great political and fashionable movements, and that they are his representatives of political and social perfection, it might be supposed that it was for contrast and rebuke, rather than for admiration and imitation, that they again make their appearance in a work in vindication of the Hebrews. Mr. Disraeli's example has, however, been followed by his

literary imitators. More than one novel with Jewish heroes and heroines has been published since 'Tancred' was produced. Jewish novels threaten, for the future, to form a remarkable class of our fictitious literature.

Such a manner of advocating the claims of an injured people to political privileges is not prepossessing, and may increase, rather than diminish, the prejudices against the Jews. A prejudice may be successfully combated by reason, but to encounter prejudice with prejudice, is only to produce a more unreasonable hatred. The novel of 'Tancred, or the New Crusade,' never induced a single member of parliament to vote in favour of the Bill for the removal of Jewish Disabilities, though it may have caused some sincere Liberals to absent themselves from the division. The cause of the persecuted Jews, in a country where the majority against them is so great, can be only maintained on the principle of equality. But to advocate their claims to equal privileges, on the ground that they ought not only to be tolerated, but to have exclusive preference, are certainly the most extraordinary tactics which the champion of a degraded race ever adopted. It is only on the principle of religious equality that the Jews can ever expect to enjoy the privileges of English citizens; but Mr. Disraeli, while

writing to the majority of Englishmen in favour of his race, asserts that the principle of religious equality is equivocal. The plain interpretation of such language is, that the Jews are not only to be equal, but superior; they are not only not to suffer oppression themselves, but they are also, according to Mr. Disraeli, to have the enviable privilege of oppressing others.

In his speech on December 16th, 1847, he argued the admission of the Jews into parliament on the principle of religious truth, and not on the principle of religious equality. This speech was not one of his happy efforts. He was frequently interrupted by those indignant Christians who maintained that there was an essential difference between Christianity and Judaism, and that on this very principle of religious truth it was the duty of Christian legislators to exclude those who denied the divinity of Christ from taking part in our parliamentary government. The speech of Mr. Disraeli was, however, distinguished by an unusual moderation. He was conscious that he was opposing the convictions of his own political friends, and that a vain triumph over the feelings and prepossessions of Englishmen might be fatal to his political career. Unfortunately, when he writes on this question, his views are stated in the most intolerant lan-

guage, so that it is very difficult to give a summary of these extraordinary opinions without not only offending, but even outraging the conscientious convictions of many sincere Christians.

Mr. Disraeli starts with the assumption that the world owes more to the Jews than to any other race of people. The Europeans have borrowed their laws, their literature, and their religion; and while treating them as the vilest of aliens, have involuntarily admitted the intellectual superiority of their race. The excuses for this treatment are founded on both unsound history and unsound theology; for as a historical fact, the Jews were dispersed before Christ appeared; and as a theological fact, even in the New Testament there is not a single passage justifying the belief that the Jews, as a nation, were to be punished for rejecting our Saviour. Christ did not give a new morality. The essential principles of Christian morals were embalmed in the writings of Moses. The crucifixion must have been preordained by Omnipotence; the executioners were, therefore, also preordained; by their deed they secured to all other nations eternal joy; and had they not thus been the involuntary agents of the sacrifice, Mr. Disraeli asks, what would have become of the atonement? Christ himself lived and died a Jew; all the apostles were Jews;

all the early Christians were Jews; no person has ever been permitted to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit but a Jew.

It ought never to be forgotten, Mr. Disraeli frequently inculcates, that our Saviour was not only the Son of God, but also a Jewish prince. Christianity is therefore Judaism, and the inspired Hebrew mind governs the world. When Christians speak of "converted Jews," they use altogether an erroneous expression; for they themselves are the converts, and not the Jews. Christianity is a modified and extended Judaism, adapted to the multitude; and a Jew who believes in the divinity of Christ is still a Jew, but one professing both parts of the Jewish religion. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, acknowledges himself to be a Jew. He believes it be the duty of all men to sympathize with their race, and his ideas on race are blended with his ideas on religion, and indeed are one and the same. The Jews are an unmixed race, the purest of all races; an unmixed race is the aristocracy of nature; the Jews are consequently, as a physiological fact which no cozening heralds can do away with, the aristocracy of mankind. Thus, by the purity of their Caucasian blood, though suffering the most intolerable cruelties, they have lived down persecution, while their oppressors have, one after

the other, disappeared, according to the irresistible natural law which is always fatal to curs.

It is not wonderful, according to Mr. Disraeli, that the Jew should not believe the second part of the Jewish religion. It came to them in a very questionable shape. One of its first duties was to avenge an inexplicable crime committed long ago by some of their unheard-of ancestors in an unknown land. Had they been humanely treated, the result might have been very different; for there is nothing repugnant to the feelings of a Jew in learning that the human race has been redeemed by a child of Israel, that only one of his race was considered worthy of accomplishing the mystery of the incarnation, that a Jewess is the queen of Heaven, that the flower of the Jewish race is sitting at the right hand of Omnipotence, that Jesus of Nazareth, a prince of the house of David, is the incarnate Son of the Most High God. Who can deny, asks Mr. Disraeli, at the conclusion of the Jewish chapter of the 'Political Biography,' that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal glory of the Jewish race?

Mr. Disraeli would himself admit that this is a fair and unexaggerated summary of his peculiar religious sentiments, and of his ideas on the claims of the Jewish race to the respect and even

worship of the Christian world. So far as it was possible, his own expressions have been followed, that he might not be misrepresented. It is too serious a theme for indulging in harsh or jesting language. But it is impossible to dismiss this subject without some observations which are humbly submitted to the consideration of every sincere Christian.

Mr. Disraeli professes himself a member of the Church of England. He is, therefore, a member of a particular Church, holding distinct views. He must be considered as believing in the general doctrines of the Church of England, as they are expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles, and interpreted by the great body of English divines. Now it is an important and most undeniable fact, that in no article of the Church of England is there the slightest foundation for Mr. Disraeli's opinions. They are opposed to every notion of Christianity which Christian people have entertained for eighteen centuries. The Church of England, as well as all other Christian churches, holds that Christianity is not a religion of race. By confounding the mere fact of blood with religious principles, and putting the distinctions of race above even the all-embracing symbol of the Cross, Mr. Disraeli would destroy all that is morally beautiful, all that is universal and

distinguishing in Christianity. The essential spirit of the Christian religion is its universality. It is of no race, of no clime, of no colour; for it unites all races, the inhabitants of all climes, and all colours, in the belief that our divine Lord and Master suffered for all. Christianity cannot be Judaism without losing all its Christian spirit, nor can a Christian be a Jew without mistaking secondary for primary causes, and really being no Christian at all. A true Christian can never pride himself on his race; he can never class any of his fellow-creatures, for whom he believes a Saviour died, in the contemptuous category of "curs." Nor can he for a moment bear to regard the Church, as Mr. Disraeli defines it, as "a sacred corporation for the promulgation and maintenance in Europe of certain Asian principles." Such a definition might be applied, with a very slight modification to Mahomedanism, or to any other religion which the Christian must believe to be false. An Asian principle can never be the principle of a universal church; nor can any religious principles, communicated by God to the human race, be considered as of "local origin."

There are very few professing Christians, of any religious denomination, who will dispute the soundness of these observations. When Mr. Dis-

raëli asserts that the Jews, as a nation, were not punished for rejecting our Saviour, that they were as much dispersed before the Crucifixion as afterwards, and that there is not a single passage in the New Testament justifying this assumption, he is again opposing an individual opinion against all the doctrines of that Church of which he is a member. Here authority is of great importance. What Christian divine, what bishop of the Church of England, will admit of such a theological interpretation? The simplest child who has had any religious instruction, will reply that the dispersion of the Jews, to which reference is made, took place seventy years after the death of Christ. Until that time the Jews were a nation; they possessed Jerusalem; and since then it has passed into the keeping of strangers. When Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans, Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that the number of Jews who were killed was one million one hundred thousand, and that nearly another hundred thousand were carried into captivity. From this time the Jews were no longer a nation; they were dispersed in foreign lands, and have never regained the city of their fathers. When Mr. Disraeli says that the Jews were as much dispersed before our Saviour's crucifixion as

after his death, he shows himself as forgetful of the essential principle of Judaism, as, when maintaining that Judaism and Christianity are identical, he disregards the essential principle of Christianity.

It is much more possible to find denunciations against the Jews as Jews by the apostles, who, Mr. Disraeli reminds us, were of the Hebrew race, than to find any passage in the sacred writings supporting his peculiar ideas. The Hebrews as a race are never mentioned by the apostles with indulgence. St. Paul anathematizes all who love not the Lord Jesus. St. John asks who is a liar but he who denieth Christ? and says, Whoever has not the Son, has not the Father. Whatever Mr. Disraeli may say, all who read the Bible must acknowledge that there is a great difference between the morality of the Old Testament as it was interpreted by the Jews, and the sublime philanthropy and holy benevolence of the Christian dispensation. The text quoted in the 'Political Biography,' from Leviticus, really proves nothing; for though the Jews were commanded to love their neighbours as themselves, they only looked upon those of their own race as their neighbours, and hated all the rest of mankind. Our Saviour taught us,

that all men were our neighbours, and that all the members of the great human family were our brethren.

Mr. Disraeli's theory of race would bring back this morality of the Jews. Instead of looking on all mankind as our brothers, according to this inhuman dogma, we should only regard individuals of our own race as our neighbours, and carry on eternal war with all other races. A theory which contradicts the conclusions of our reason, and the beneficent aspirations of our hearts, cannot be true. A physiological assumption, at which our moral sense recoils, must be false; it is at once reduced to an absurdity, more certain than the absurdity of the mere logician. The benevolent feelings of our nature, are the safest tests of the most sublime theories. Whatever makes us better, whatever makes us wiser, whatever makes us more in love with each other, we may safely conclude to be true. Whatever makes us more selfish, more uncharitable, more hostile, we may, in defiance of all the reasoning of the philosopher, conclude to be false. A theory which allows its professor to call any human beings, who are God's creatures like himself, "curs," we may depend upon being wrong; for every Christian principle, and all the

nobler aspirations of human nature at once revolt at such an insulting stigma.

It is gratifying to find that the physiological fact on which Mr. Disraeli bases such a harsh and intolerant theory is not so undisputed as he may himself believe it to be. This question of race has only lately been prominently brought before the world; and it may well be doubted, whether the collection of facts, and the experience of centuries, are extensive enough to justity any very confident deduction. Even the science of physiology to which Mr. Disraeli appeals, notwithstanding all the researches and experiments of this age, is still in a most unsatisfactory state. The physiologist who is so ready to declare with decision the laws affecting the relations of different races, has not yet discovered the peculiar uses of some of the important organs in the human frame. But it would be doing the most eminent professors of physiology great injustice, to speak of them as confidently maintaining such propositions, unsupported as they are by all the evidence which constitutes the value of a scientific law. It is only the determined theorist who dips into a physiological work in order to gratify his own presumptuous conclusions, that will dogmatically declaim, with all the pretension of ignorance,

on the laws which govern races, and boldly affirm that his own race is the purest, and, therefore, the aristocracy of nature. In such a dogma there is more vanity than either science or Christianity. The "pride of the animal man" in being conscious that his race is the best, is that very pride which the Christian religion endeavours to root out of the human heart. But it is the pride which Mr. Disraeli attributes, in a sympathising spirit, to Sidonia; and it is in strict accordance with the animal theory in 'Contarini Fleming.'

But though this may be excellent Judaism, it is not Christianity; that which ministers to the pride of the Hebrew is not the Christianity of the Gentiles, nor of the gospels. The true Christian, with a humble and contrite heart, does not search history to plume himself on his race. When he rejects the godless theory which would deliver up the weak to the mercy of the strong, allow each race to tyrannise over each other, and exterminate each other, he rejects it on eminently Christian principles. He rejoices, not for himself but for his fellow-men, in learning, that so far from it being certain that the purest race is the best, the direct contrary appears to be as near the truth.

The Spartans were fierce, intolerant, and cruel; they isolated themselves from the rest of mankind; the Spartan glory passed away, and left little

worthy of remembrance, little in arts or literature that has survived their transient dominion of brute force. The Athenians were hospitable, generous, and humane, ready to mix with strangers, and delighting in intercourse with other nations; the glory of Athens is still present with us; her philosophers, orators, and poets, still instruct and civilize the world. The Jews were, undoubtedly, a great people. But their great qualities have been almost useless to them, because they would not be tolerant to other nations. Their civilization only partly civilized, their literature only partly humanised, their religion only partly exalted them above the gross materialism of the world, because they had no sympathies in common with other races. Thus the Hebrew intellect has been cursed with intellectual barrenness. The Bible has accomplished little for the Jews, even while elevating other people. This purity of race has been the bane of the Hebrews. They have regarded their race too much, and their God too little. Pride of race is selfishness in its most concentrated form; and selfishness is ever opposed to all spiritual improvement. While it is impossible to defend or to excuse the tyranny which the Jews have suffered from the Christians, still there can be no doubt that they endured only what they would have themselves

inflicted on the Christians. The mere difference of religion will not explain the terrible persecution which the Jews have undergone. The Romans were the most liberal of conquerors; but the Jews were more cruelly treated by them than even by the bigoted Christians of the middle ages. It was the intolerance of the Jews that engendered intolerance in their oppressors. It was the stiff-necked pride of the Hebrews that has been the cause of much of their misery.

The sacred volumes are undeniable witnesses against the Jews. Whatever may be the purity of their blood, the Old Testament at least proves that purity of blood does not produce purity of character. It may be said that the Jews as a people were impure. Much that is refined, chivalrous, and delicate, much of the moral purity and respectful treatment of women, was not derived from the Hebrews. Yet this is the most important distinction between the civilization of ancient times, and of modern Europe. When Mr. Disraeli sketches his Jewish hero Sidonia, all the old impurity of the Jewish character is found in this specimen of the great modern Hebrews. Sidonia has no respect for women. He regards them as a physiologist would regard an inferior animal, and is as disgusting as the hero of a novel can be. Mr. Dis-

raeli tells us that woman was to Sidonia "a mere toy." When the financier beholds the Princess Lucretia, he feels "both as a man and a physiologist," that he is in the presence of no ordinary organisation.

This is thorough Jewish morality, the true "Asian principle," which it is the glory of the mixed races to have discredited. The people that has kept the more refined and weaker sex in a state of degradation to the other, cannot, as Mr. Disraeli argues, have contributed most to human happiness.

If the Bible is to be regarded, not as a mere human composition, but as the inspiration of the Almighty, it is sinking the primary cause in the secondary to dwell with exultation on "the records of Jewish history," and "the odes and elegies of Jewish poets," as evidences of the superiority of the Jewish race. It is a kind of blasphemy; for profane and sacred literature can never be weighed in the same balance. But this is the spirit in which Mr. Disraeli develops his opinions. It is not because the Bible was written by Jewish poets and historians, but because it was written by the Almighty, using some Jews as his instruments, that Christians read and venerate the Holy Scriptures. When Mr. Disraeli asks, if the Jews had not crucified our

Saviour, what would have become of the atonement? he is again putting primary causes entirely out of view, and dwelling in a most painful manner on the secondary agency. The Jews who crucified our Lord were obeying the impulses of their own evil passions; but instruments of evil, through the dispensation of Providence are frequently productive of good. Agents could never be wanting to Omnipotence; but to allow that the Jews were innocent, and preordained murderers, and that had they not committed their great crime the designs of the Almighty would have been frustrated, is to question the first principles of religious faith, and to adopt the impious doctrine of an iron necessity uncontrolled by Superior Wisdom.

A Christian to defend the crucifixion! A champion of orthodoxy to deny that the Jews committed a crime when they perpetrated that awful deed at which the sun was darkened, the earth shaken, and the vail of the Temple rent in twain! Has Mr. Disraeli ever read one of the Gospels with attention? Has he ever reflected on the meaning of the sublime and holy words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"? Does not this prayer imply that the Jews were committing a crime, and that they needed forgiveness? If they were innocent and preordained

executioners, as Mr. Disraeli maintains, then Judas must also have been an innocent and pre-ordained traitor. Yet no Christian man can surely forget the awful denunciation, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed!" We are also told that it would have been better for Judas had he never been born. Of all the children of men, this treacherous disciple is the one who is most thoroughly abandoned to perdition; and yet his treachery, as well as the sin of the murderers of our Lord, must, if Mr. Disraeli's impious apology for the crucifixion is accepted, be considered as guiltless and even meritorious. So blasphemous is this notion, that it is scarcely possible to comment on it with sincerity without using strong language, or to write of it calmly without seeming apathetic.

Nor can the Jewish race be regarded as the only medium of communication between the Creator and mankind. Wherever Mr. Disraeli can find the least foundation for such an extraordinary assertion, it is difficult to suppose. According to the doctrines of the Church of England, the Mediator between our Heavenly Father and his erring creatures is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Our Saviour is our only Intercessor. To say with Mr. Disraeli, that the Jewish race, as a

race, are mediators, when it is remembered that the Jewish race, as a race, deny the divinity of Christ altogether, is certainly the most singular Christianity which was ever professed. It is, however, of the same kind as all the Christianity of 'Tancred, or the New Crusade;' though the dogma in the 'Political Biography' is more temperately expressed. The lady of Bethany, who first, as Mr. Disraeli's Jewish heroine, uttered these strange sentiments, which he has himself adopted as his own in the 24th chapter of the political memoir, says to Tancred, "We agree that half Christendom worships a Jewess, and the other half a Jew. Now, let me ask you one more question—Which do you think should be the superior race; the worshipped or the worshippers?" This question might be fairly modified thus: whether are those who believe in Our Saviour, as the Son of God, or those who believe him only to be a Jew, the better Christians? It is folly, it is impiety in those who believe in Christianity to talk of the superiority of races, and especially to arrogate to the Jews the superiority over the devout believers in the divinity of our Lord and Master. But Tancred's mission to Jerusalem, his notion that there must be something peculiarly sacred in Palestine, and that Christians ought in these days to go thither, expect visits

from angels, and direct commuications from the Almighty, as in the times of the Old Testament, are all conceived in opposition to the Christianity of the Church of England, and, indeed, of any other Christian church. We have all been taught that, by the mission of Christ, the law was fulfilled. From that time the empire of darkness was smitten, the human race was saved; the divine agony was the expiation for the world. The Christian believes that God is everywhere, that Christ is ever with his Church. As Mr. Disraeli is a member of the Church of England, he must believe that Christ is with the Church of England.

The crusaders of the middle ages did not go to Palestine for the purpose of speaking with angels. They went to rescue the sepulchre of Christ from the hands of unbelievers. If the "new crusade," which Mr. Disraeli recommends to the young nobles of England, has any purpose, it appears to be for keeping Jerusalem in the hands of Mahomedans rather than of Christians, because the Mahomedans are better Christians than the Europeans who believe in Christ. This is Mr Disraeli's opinion. This is the doctrine of race in its most uncompromising form, and strikes at once at all genuine Christianity. "The crusaders," Mr. Disraeli says, "looked upon the Saracens as infidels; whereas the children of the Desert bore

a much nearer affinity to the sacred corpse that had for a brief space consecrated the holy sepulchre, than any of the invading host of Europe. The same blood flowed in their veins, and they recognized the divine missions both of Moses and his greater successor."* There can be no doubt about the meaning of these words. It is plainly, that "race is the only truth," as Mr. Disraeli repeats, and that thus the Mahomedans who believe in the Koran, and the Jews who believe only in the Old Testament, are better Christians, have "a nearer affinity to the sacred corpse," than the Europeans who sincerely believe in our Saviour, and who devote their lives to his cause. Henceforth, therefore, Christianity must depend, not on the Bible, but on physiology; the best Christians must ever be Asiatics; the relations of men with their Creator must depend on their genealogy; and Christians must not trust to their belief, but to their Caucasian blood. Mr. Disraeli can never have pondered on the doctrines of Christianity as they have hitherto been received. His conclusions are so revolting to all religious feelings, that he cannot have examined the simplest principles of our faith.

According to this theory of race, what is to become of the myriads whose misfortune it is not

* 'Tancred; or, the New Crusade,' vol. ii., p. 9.

to be descended from Caucasus? This is the moral test of this grand theory. It establishes a system of castes more degrading than the castes of India. This Mr. Disraeli does not shrink from; he speaks of the Jews as associated with those whom he terms "all the scum and low castes of Europe." Thus all the weaker races of humanity are to be trodden under the feet of their oppressors; they are dogs, and not even good dogs, but curs; they are left to misery and slavery, insulted by man, and abandoned by God.

No lofty assumptions about purity of blood, no magniloquent phrases about the inexorable law of nature, will ever make such a theory tolerable to a humane, an enlightened, a Christian man. It is opposed to all the benevolent humanity of the Gospel. It at once assails Christianity and moral justice; whatever degrades the poorest creatures in human form, of whatever race, lowers all mankind. The divine image of the Creator cannot be entirely effaced from one race, without being obliterated out of all the great human family. Thus this "Semitic principle," founded on the physiological doctrine of Caucasian purity, would increase every vice and crime which it is the great object of Christianity to remove.

The slavery of the middle ages was abolished by the divine influence of the Cross; this physio-

logical dogma would bring it back and perpetuate it. The whole history of the Christian church, if this history be worth anything, is a divine crusade against that very theory which Mr. Disraeli propounds to the Christian people of the nineteenth century. The mission of the Church has been and still is to raise the poor and the outcasts. If Christianity be not the religion of the poor, if it be not the religion of those "scum and low castes of Europe," those "curs" for whom he has such an inordinate contempt, it cannot be the true religion, and the only true religion. Judaism in modern ages is the religion of a caste, but Christianity can never be the religion of a caste without ceasing to be Christianity.

Mr. Disraeli asks, "What would be the consequence, on the great Anglo-Saxon republic for example, were its citizens to secede from their sound principle of reserve, and mingle with their negro and coloured populations?" A philanthropist who believes in his Bible, may ask in reply what is to become of the negro and coloured populations themselves, if the tyranny of the Caucasian republicans of the New World is to be continued on the principle of unmixed purity of race? Because slavery cannot be defended on any Christian principle, the aristocrats of poor human nature have had recourse to this physiological

theory. But it is right that the voice of the African should also be heard. It is right that those other tribes whom Caucasian pride would condemn to hopeless degradation should also be considered. Whenever people are determined to be very unjust, they are sure to give to their injustice some fine name. The American citizens cannot bear to hear the word "slavery;" the term "slave" is altogether expunged from their legal vocabulary. Legalised slavery has been christened the "domestic institution;" and it is considered intellectual prostitution to point out the abuses of this venerable "domestic institution." Mr. Disraeli, in advocating his physiological dogma, has followed in the footsteps of the transatlantic patriots, and even furnishes them with a convenient phrase by which they may excuse their lordly pride. He calls their haughty domination over their fellow-men of different race, "their sound principle of reserve;" and this sound principle really means systematic tyranny, cruelty, and wrong. Such would indeed be everywhere the result, if this theory of race were adopted, and the mild principles of Christianity disregarded as much by the Caucasian multitudes of the world as they are by the ingenious author of 'Tancred,' and the 'Political Biography.'

The more terrestrial claims which Mr. Disraeli

makes in favour of the Jews to the respect and veneration of other people are as singular as his reasons for arrogating to them spiritual pre-eminence. He argues that their right to honour and favour from all European nations is unquestionable, because there is no living race that "so much delights, and fascinates, and elevates, and ennobles Europe as the Jewish;" for while the finest dancers, singers, and musicians are sons and daughters of Israel, these brilliant accessories are lost in the sublimer claim to be the only creators of the beautiful, whose works can be compared with the beautiful productions of antiquity. Mr. Disraeli says that in modern times music is the only means by which the beautiful can be developed; that were it not for music the beautiful must be considered dead; that the great musical composers whose creations must rank with those of Homer, Sophocles, Praxiteles, and Phidias, are all of the Jewish race; and that the tribes who conquered Canaan have done more, with less means, than even the boasted Athenians.

It has been well said that it is possible by logic to bring out any conclusion, however extraordinary, if the major proposition is sufficiently large, and, while containing its minor, all else that it contains is quietly put out of view. When these singular premises on which Mr. Disraeli founds

such an extravagant claim, are separately examined, they take such extraordinary forms as to astonish all considerate readers. The English people are expected in the first place to admit, that of all arts music is that which most delights, fascinates, elevates, and ennobles; in the next place, that it is by music only that the beautiful can now be created; in the next place that if it "were not for music the beautiful is dead;" and at last that Mozart and Mendelssohn are about the only great creators of the beautiful in modern ages who can be placed by the side of the poets, tragedians, sculptors, and painters of ancient Greece.

Is it true that music is the most delightful, the most fascinating, the most elevating and ennobling of arts? Delightful and fascinating it certainly is, but it is not so certain that it is superior to all the creations of the poet, the orator, and the dramatist. Music by itself is not spiritual; it appeals only to the senses; it is, without words, merely an exquisite sensual enjoyment; and to believe that it is superior to all purely intellectual creations, is to believe that matter is superior to intellect. Like all sensual pleasures, even the most delicate and refined, the emotions music excites are transient. No human being, by music alone, was ever made wiser, nobler, and better. They are

the echoes of the harp of David, the divine minstrel, the noble words in harmony with the enchanting music, which give all the sublimity to the finest oratorios. Some of the most religious and most intellectual of men have thought, and perhaps not wrongly, that there was something profane in an oratorio. There are many people whose pious ecstacies are only roused when they are listening to the vocal and instrumental harmonies of Exeter Hall. There are many people who during the opera season go to the chapels frequented by the most entrancing singers, solely that they may listen to the music. It is far from certain, that the people who "amid applauding theatres yield themselves to the full spell of a Mozart or a Mendelssohn," are the most devout worshippers of the beautiful. It is even far from certain that the beautiful would be quite dead, though the compositions of Mozart and Mendelssohn were never heard. The beautiful is associated with virtue in the minds of some simple persons, and they may still believe that as long as there is goodness or virtue in the world, the beautiful can never die. The phrase "sweet singer of Israel" is not now always associated in our minds with virtue; and perhaps, not because we are profanely insensible to the beautiful, but because some of

these delightful performers have in their lives occasionally forgotten the principle of the German sage, that goodness was beautiful, and that the beautiful included the good.

Is it then true, that were it not for music, we might in these days say, that the beautiful is dead? We must have sadly degenerated in virtue, for every truly beautiful association is eminently moral. All men may, if they please, be developers of the beautiful; for the noblest development of the beautiful is not, perhaps, a poem, a picture, or a statue, nor, with all deference to Mr. Disraeli, a piece of music; but the finest development of the beautiful is a beautiful life. This we can all live. This we can really create. The most beautiful creation in this world is a beautiful human soul. No one, indeed, can be perfect, for imperfection is the inevitable lot of man. But the nearer we approach to it, the more we strive after it, the more our eyes open to the beautiful; and from this struggle with the darkness and corruption of mortality, as the celestial spirit subdues the earthly element with which it is mingled, arises the moral perception of the beautiful. The beautiful is heavenly and good, ugliness earthly and evil; the one spiritual and immortal, the other mate-

rial and perishable; the one positive, and the other negative; the one is life, the other death. Thus the beautiful is not dead; the beautiful can never die. Even the most wretched and humiliated being has some dim perception of the glory to which his eyes are darkened: the most ugly is not entirely ugly. Nor can the noblest of mankind be altogether beautiful, or else human creatures would really be divided into castes, and Mr. Disraeli's theory of race might be correct. The imperfections of the best of men are the links connecting them with the worst. Some are endowed with a more vivid susceptibility to what is beautiful in nature and in man, and with a greater capability for communicating their beautiful conceptions than the rest of mankind. Such are poets, such are those men of genius who are "creators of the beautiful." It is their work to elevate and refine the great multitude whose lives are spent in more material occupations. But that the world admires these brilliant souls who are its beautifiers and purifiers, is convincing evidence that beauty exists, and must exist, in the heart and spirit of the world. The beautiful must then be as immortal as the soul of man. Wherever any human being is earnestly struggling with the powers of darkness around him

and within him; wherever there is any appreciation of human worth, and any love of human excellence; wherever there is one living man whose mind is open to all the greatness and glory of the external world, and the still more resplendent glories which may be discovered in the moral world by those whose eyes have not been shut by the animal yearnings of their corrupt natures; wherever there is a pious and resolute being, who amidst the blasting storms and scorching fires of evil passions, in the arena of politics, or in other spheres of angry contention, can persevere in what is really good, have the courage to pursue it, and while the clouds of dust are flying about him, can still look up from earth to heaven; we may be sure that there the beautiful is, and that if the world is not again to be a chaos, there the beautiful must ever be.

Can it then, for a moment, be true, that it is only by music that in modern times we are permitted to develop the beautiful? This question has been answered while considering what the beautiful is. It is impossible that Mr. Disraeli's postulate can be correct. It is an absurdity in terms; and with his still more wonderful axiom, that the Hebrew composers are the only creators of the beautiful who can be compared with the

great creators of Greece, carries its own refutation.* Surely there have been great poets, dramatists, painters, and sculptors, in these modern times. Even though Mr. Disraeli were to consider the Greek dramatists as greater artists than the dramatists of modern Europe, he can scarcely deny that the genius who produced the 'Tempest,' 'Twelfth Night,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'Lear,' and 'Macbeth,' was as exquisite a delineator of the beautiful as the greatest of the Athenian dramatists. Shakspeare may fairly be set against Sophocles. If 'Paradise Lost' be not so great a poem as the 'Iliad,' Milton cannot, at least, be denied the glory of being a great developer both of the sublime and beautiful. Even though want of genius may be contemptuously imputed to the English painters and sculptors, the great artists of Italy were surely delineators of the beautiful. Raphael and Michael Angelo may rank even with Praxiteles and Phidias. As creations of the beautiful, the political compositions of Burke may challenge competition with the finest speeches of Demo-

* Ridiculous as this theory is, it has found an enthusiastic believer. A novel, entitled "Charles Auchester," has just been published, with this sentence of Mr. Disraeli about music for a motto, and dedicated to him in the following terms: "To the Author of 'Contarini Fleming,' whose perfect genius suggested this imperfect history." The work is just what it might, from its motto and dedication, have been expected to be.

sthenes or Cicero; and they are far superior in comprehensive wisdom to the productions of the two great ancient orators. And is there nothing beautiful in wisdom? And is there nothing beautiful in science? Are all the great achievements of our natural philosophers to be quite forgotten? They are not mere material triumphs; they are victories over distance and time; they are revelations of the great universe of which so little was before known; they are positive and indisputable acquisitions; they are works which have been accomplished by human intellect to promote the happiness of man; they are eminently good; they must then, if beauty be more than a mere prettiness, be eminently beautiful. Bacon mapping out the bounds of human knowledge; Galileo meditating on the revolutions of the heavenly bodies; Newton watching the apple as it fell to the ground, and discovering the mysterious affinity that holds all the mighty spheres in their appointed places, and in relation to each other; Watt projecting the steam-engine, and thus bringing all the world into closer communion; Herschel gazing through his telescope on the hosts of the universe, all reflecting the glory and power of the Creator, and while humiliating man also exalting him, since to him alone, of all created beings, was it permitted to

explore those great mysteries in which deep calls unto deep, world to world, and sphere to sphere—were all producers of what is intellectually good, and consequently developers of the spiritually beautiful.

Mr. Disraeli is resolved that the Jewish race should have now the same peculiar privileges as when they were the chosen people of God. He sets all history, philosophy, and Christianity at defiance, in order to gratify this pride of race, and establish this physiological theory. He cannot see the impiety of comparing sacred and profane literature, calling the inspired compositions of the Bible Jewish olynthians and philippics, and drawing parallels between the sacred volumes of the Scriptures, and the poetry and philosophy of the Athenians. When the Jews are to be exalted for their mere worldly qualifications, Mr. Disraeli sinks their divine attributes, and we are told that the Jews and the Athenians have done most for mankind; that their fortunes have been similar; that they both were divided into tribes; both built a temple on an acropolis, and "both produced a literature which all European nations have accepted with reverence and admiration." When the Jews are to be glorified for their spiritual qualities and Caucasian purity, Mr. Disraeli contemptuously denies the claims of all other nations,

and writes of the Jews as the best Christians, the most intellectual of people, the most eminent creators of the beautiful, and the most profound politicians. He cannot bear that their privileges to sit in Parliament should rest on the same grounds as those of other dissenters from the Established Church. He ostentatiously eschews political sentimentalism; and through the mouth of Sidonia has "no objection to illiberality, provided that it be an element of power." He forgets that Lord John Russell and the advocates of religious equality assert that illiberality is never an element of power, but that it must ever be an element of weakness. He forgets that one cause of the weakness of the Jews is probably the illiberality with which they have shunned all intercourse with other races. It is difficult to read without a smile, Sidonia's sententious eloquence on the glories of his people. "Yet the Jews, Coningsby," exclaims the physiological and financial hero, "are essentially Tories." And certainly, if Toryism be monopoly and illiberality, Mr. Disraeli's Judaism is its exact prototype; for he claims for the Jews a monopoly of Caucasian purity, a monopoly of religion, a monopoly of intellect, a monopoly of the beautiful, a monopoly of political ability, a monopoly of God.

All the confusion of continental Europe pro-

ceeds, Mr. Disraeli says, from the undeniable fact that men of the Jewish race are at the head of every popular insurrection, for the people of God have leagued themselves with atheists, because they will no longer endure the tyranny of Christian Europe. The fiery energy and teeming resources of the children of Israel, we are assured, did all the mischief in 1848. But there was one politician who saw how necessary it was to enlist the Jews in the cause of existing society; this was Prince Metternich, "the most enlightened of modern statesmen, not to say the most intellectual of men." Mr. Disraeli's instance is not very happy; for if it was the custom of Metternich to employ the Jews in the service of the Austrian empire, and if the Jews are so formidable as political agitators, it would be hard to explain the fact that no part of Europe suffered so much as the Austrian empire in 1848, and that Metternich himself was obliged to seek refuge in London, where, unfortunately, the Jewish Emancipation Bill had just been thrown out by the Lords. If the condition of Austria is to be accepted as the proof of the political abilities of the Hebrew race, with all due deference to Mr. Disraeli, a more wretched specimen of statesmanship could not be presented. A monarchy openly governed by the sword, torn to pieces by

internal convulsions, the finances in the greatest disorder, dependent upon a neighbouring power for aid against its own subjects, and trembling at the approach of European hostilities, because the first cannon-shot must be the death-knell of this infatuated government; such an empire does not say much for the most enlightened of modern statesmen, and the efforts of the great Caucasian race whom he thought it profound policy to favour. In England the Jews are powerless; yet in England they have been persecuted, and are still deprived of the most distinguishing privileges of English citizens. The secret societies, and all the resources of the Hebrews, had no influence in this country during the terrible revolutionary year, when the thrones of continental Europe tottered and fell. The secret societies are themselves the effect of which the cause is misgovernment. But Mr. Disraeli is so enamoured of his Caucasian theory, that in the great continental outbreak he can see nothing but the insurrection of conquered races and the devotees of Pagan altars, which have been abolished for more than a thousand years. Even in England, when Chartism lifted its head, he had the same theory ready to account most satisfactorily for this alarming social portent. 'Sybil; or, The Two Nations,' was written with the inten-

tion of showing how the Normans and the Saxons were still separated, how the two races still hated each other, and how the ideal Englishman was an unmeaning abstraction founded on a physiological error. The great nation that has peopled America, conquered India, swept the seas, worked out the great constitutional problem of modern times, defied the world, accomplished such great things in literature, politics, and science, has according to him no distinct character. Its success is opposed to the theory of unmixed races; it is therefore depreciated, that the Hebrew character may be exalted.

There can, indeed, be no such thing as progress or civilization if this theory be admitted. The ashes of former volcanic fires must ever be ready to redden, and consume the fairest civilization. The hand of every man must be turned against that of his fellow; the knife must ever be at the throat. All the noble philanthropy which induced a Wilberforce, a Clarkson, and a Burke to raise their voices against the tyranny of race over race; their indignant condemnation of the traffic in human flesh; the struggle of every good Christian to enlighten the savage, and to develop the dim intelligence of the native Indian; the enlightened humanity which sees even in the narrow forehead and

almost brutish form of the African a divine spirit, that, under proper education, may free itself from the dark spell by which it is now enthralled—must be considered as so much ambitious and eloquent folly, inspired by an ignorant, sentimental, and effeminate benevolence. Men might fitly, then, say that "the beautiful is dead;" for the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, vice and virtue, would be effaced; and moral philosophy would indeed be that delusion, founded on physiological ignorance, which Mr. Disrali said it was many years before he advocated the Jewish cause.

CHAPTER XV.

When the passions of the present age have subsided, it will be scarcely credited that the country party, which had such a horror of the admission of the Jews into the legislature on the simple principle of religious toleration, was at the same time led by a politician of such strong Judaical opinions as Mr. Disraeli. He is a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Very few individuals of the Jewish race would go so far as he does in speculation. It is probable that neither Baron Rothschild nor Alderman Salomons pride themselves so much on their Hebrew descent as Mr. Disraeli, who puts his feet on the neck of the mixed races, and ascribes to the Jews every moral and spiritual quality. Session after session have his political supporters indignantly denounced the only cause in which he appears to be sincere. Session after

session have the Jews been called by his party "aliens," "foreigners," and "crucifiers"—Session after session they have said that the admission of one Jew into the House of Commons would destroy the Christian character of the assembly, and that England would be abandoned to perdition. Yet all this time their own political leader disclaims the term "converted Jew;" argues that the Christians who believe in Christianity are the converts, and not the Jews; even courageously acknowledges that he is himself a Jew; and maintains that Christianity is the second part of the Jewish religion, but is still Judaism.

Fact is truly stranger than fiction. This farce, which would be thought incredible and preposterous in the theatre, is gravely acted, year after year, in the House of Commons. Either Mr. Disraeli ought not to lead the Tory party, or the Tory party ought at once to give up their prejudices against the Jewish representative of the city of London, and allow this distinguished merchant to take his seat in parliament. As it is, their opposition makes both their Hebrew leader and themselves ridiculous; for even in the Life of Bentinck, Mr. Disraeli expresses some of the most extreme Judaical sentiments. He perhaps thought that, when recording the glories of Protection, he might at least be allowed one chapter

for himself. And the Protectionists, when the 'Political Biography' was published, pardoned this unfortunate chapter for the many pages in vindication of themselves. They were very proud of the memoir. They saw themselves figuring as heroes. They could not quarrel with one who had made them look so well in a printed book. It was published, too, very opportunely, just before they changed places in the House of Commons, became ministerialists, and afforded Mr. Disraeli the occasion, which many great political philosophers have never enjoyed, of carrying his ideas into practice. With this object, there can be no doubt, the book was written; it was like a certificate of character: the chronicles of Protection were the credentials to the leadership of the House of Commons, the most eminent position in the government, and the implicit confidence of the Tory gentlemen.

That confidence was given in no stinted measure. There was not one sentence in the volume which could be even maliciously interpreted to mean that the cause of Protection would ever be trifled with, still less abandoned. So far as words could be trusted, Protection in the December of 1851 was exactly in the same position as when it was first advocated by Mr. Disraeli in 1846. If any liberal member ven-

tured to whisper that as soon as the Tory government was installed, Protection would be given up by the cabinet, such a notion was most indignantly scouted by the agriculturists. They asked, and with some plausibility, whether Mr. Disraeli would have written such a great volume about Protection, if he meditated laying down his arms? Was not the 'Political Biography' intended to prove that Protection was still alive? Whatever else Mr. Disraeli might have said, had he not indignantly condemned Sir Robert Peel for professing one policy in opposition and another in power? Had he not been sublimely eloquent on the necessity of leaders keeping faith with their party, even against their country? Had he not written and said much on the necessity of parties having distinct principles? Had he not always declaimed against high philosophy and low practice? Had he not protested against the government of clerks? These were the indignant interrogatories which met the ears of every credulous person when the list of the Derby Cabinet was published, and Mr. Disraeli became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Friends began to muster about him; some authors made speeches about the pen at length governing in Downing Street; success was thought to atone for every mistake and indiscretion; to doubt Mr. Disraeli's

complete triumph was a species of impiety. To question his infallibility was, to these ardent admirers, to question virtue, wisdom, and genius.

It was to no purpose that Mr. Disraeli's enthusiastic followers were reminded that his success had been more apparent than real. It was to no purpose that it was pointed out to them, that the cause of Protection, after five years' advocacy, was no further advanced than when the Corn Laws were repealed. It was to no purpose that the Jewish question was indicated as proving that Mr. Disraeli had never been able to prevail on his party to adopt his principles, and that, in fact, notwithstanding his talk about creeds and creations, he had only been successful when conforming to the prejudices of the country gentlemen, and had never induced them to abandon one of their prepossessions in favour of his ideas. The manœuvre by which the majority of the government was diminished to fourteen, was believed to be an undeniable proof that Mr. Disraeli would certainly triumph. But the least reflection might have shown these exulting friends, that it was owing to Mr. Gladstone and the followers of the late Sir Robert Peel, who were tired of supporting the Whigs, and wished to bring about their resignation, that this

manœuvre was at all effective. To the pure Protectionists this display of tactics was, indeed, quite barren of result. But there was no time for sober reflection. It was enough that Mr. Disraeli was in office, that he had been trusted by his sovereign, and that the star of the landed interest was once more high in the heavens.

If we then behold Mr. Disraeli at the height of power, with the enthusiastic applause of the Tories—the finances of the greatest political and commercial country in the world intrusted to his keeping, the leadership of the House of Commons, all Europe and the world watching him, and him alone, as the real head of the government—we must regard him as in the proudest situation which a man of genius ever attained. Few public men, with the most undisputed abilities, had ever reached that eminence which Mr. Disraeli, now occupied. Neither Mr. Canning nor Mr. Burke had been so successful. Mr. Disraeli was in a position to give effect to all his original ideas. He could now carry out his principles, show us what pure and enlightened Toryism really was, not in a political novel, but in the practical world, shame the latitudinarian red-tapists for ever, be the great financier of this generation, contribute to the glory of England, and gain for himself

undying renown. If ever man was to be envied, that man was Mr. Disraeli in the spring of 1852. Politicians of the most opposite parties were struck with astonishment at his worldly greatness; of all the millions of the subjects of Queen Victoria he was the individual the most singularly blessed.

To do full justice to his deeds as Chancellor of the Exchequer, would require the pen of Lord George Bentinck's political biographer. Only a painter so skilful in putting in the lights and shades, could make the Derby-Disraelites as glorious as the Protectionists. This work will probably soon be accomplished: Mr. Disraeli may be even now executing it in his comparative retirement. In a volume containing an examination of his political philosophy, as well as a development of his literary and political life, now that Mr. Disraeli is at the summit of worldly success, and that according to the rules of literary art, this history must soon conclude, it will be sufficient to observe how his political opinions were practically carried out during his administration. It is not every day that the world affords us such an opportunity of illustrating a political regenerator's precepts by his own practice. When such an occasion is afforded, its advantages should not be lost to mankind.

The fundamental principle of all Mr. Disraeli's politics, that principle which he asserts he never changed, which he held steadfastly in 1831, 1835, 1837, 1841, and 1846, and which covered all his inconsistencies, and made them consistent, was, that the Tory party was the democratic party. Even in the free trade debates of 1846, Mr. Disraeli said that no politicians were so much opposed to democracy as the modern Liberals. To induce the Tories to adopt a democratic course, was the great effort which all who knew what Mr. Disraeli's political opinions were expected him to make when he became their minister. As soon as the government was formed, the Earl of Derby gave a programme of its policy. All great public questions were to be adjourned until after the dissolution. For one reason alone, however, his lordship asked the support of the Parliament and the country; it was the special mission of the new government to combat democracy. He called on all England to assist him and Mr. Disraeli in putting a stop to that terrible democratic spirit which was abroad, and everywhere committing such frightful ravages. Mr. Disraeli gave no particular exposition of this policy in the House of Commons. The Earl of Derby's speech was considered satisfactory and complete.

After the astonishment of the select few who are accustomed to think on political affairs, and to believe that professions of principle have some meaning, had partly subsided, they began to look forward to the new budget. This was in Mr. Disraeli's exclusive province; on himself alone this great labour devolved. He had both with tongue and pen, bitterly taunted Sir Robert Peel for bringing forward the measures of his opponents. He had said that there was no enormity like this; it was debauching the nation by public gambling. In 'Sibyl,' he had made a ludicrous picture of a Conservative minister seeking in the pigeon-holes of a Whig bureau for the measure he had been opposing for many years. Mr. Disraeli's first budget was produced, and openly admitted to have been taken from the pigeon-holes of Sir Charles Wood. Though introduced by the champion of the Protectionists, it was so perfectly innocent that the Whig financier praised it highly, and acknowledged that it was his own budget, with most of the items he had fixed upon when preparing the accounts for the year. It was taken from the repositories in Downing Street by the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, and presented as a peace offering to the House of Commons. There was as indignant an outcry from the landed interest as ever

greeted the free trade measures of Sir Robert Peel.

It was reported that the Earl of Derby was not satisfied with this liberal financial exposition. Mr. Disraeli had ever reproached Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell for permitting their colleagues to say one thing in the House of Commons and another in the House of Lords. He had christened the Duke of Wellington the "Dictator." He had been remarkably enthusiastic for the constitutional freedom of Parliament. A short while after the introduction of the budget, the Earl of Derby dined with the Goldsmiths' Company, and in a set speech about compromises, lectured the House of Commons, rebuked his own Chancellor of the Exchequer, and observed, that Mr. Disraeli, in the budget, had not done justice to the claims of the agricultural class. This the Duke of Wellington would certainly never have presumed to do. It was most unconstitutional indeed, for a prime minister in an after-dinner speech, neither in the House of Lords nor in the House of Commons, but in the dining-room of a mercantile corporation, thus to insult Parliament and his colleagues by apologising for their imperfections, and by giving another version of the budget for the benefit of his landed supporters.

It was in this manner that the public business was conducted while Mr. Disraeli was in the government. No minister ever dictated to the House of Commons so much as the Earl of Derby. Every speech he made in the Lords was a significant intimation to the other assembly.

Never before was there such equivocation, such a want of harmony, such a contradiction of principles and opinions. It was impossible to know from the professions of one minister what another would say, or what the united cabinet would do. As the general election approached, this discreditable ambiguity was enough to make any straightforward politician doubt the evidence of his senses. For many years Mr. Disraeli had been publishing volumes and making speeches on the evil of statesmen not acting up to their professions, not having a definite policy, and not strictly maintaining the same principles both in office and in opposition. What was the portentous phenomenon beheld by plain Englishmen when Mr. Disraeli was himself high in office? The prime minister unblushingly announced that he would take his policy from the hustings; the government asked the people out of doors to give them a policy; and the ministers hesitated not to boast openly that if the majority

was in favour of Protection, they would still be Protectionists; and that if it was in favour of free trade, they would not think it necessary to resign, but would honestly profess the doctrines of free trade, and conduct the administration on the principles of Sir Robert Peel. This was the only announcement the government ever made which was not ambiguous. The policy of Mr. Disraeli and his cabinet was to be the policy of the parliamentary majority, whatever that policy might be.

All the old arts of faction were revived, and employed more unscrupulously than they had ever been by the Tories of a former generation. Twenty different cries, each contradictory to the other, were raised by the ministerialists. They were only consistent in their determination at all risks to get a majority. The most indefinite cry was the best, because it had the least meaning, and gave no pledge. It was "Confidence in the Earl of Derby," and, of course, Mr. Disraeli. Thus persons were boldly substituted for principles, by the followers of the man who had so fiercely assailed Sir Robert Peel, and accused him of wishing to retain office from personal considerations, and not on party principles. When the cry of "Confidence in the Earl of Derby" was not sufficient, and it was abso-

lutely necessary to avow some principle, it was chosen to suit the taste of the constituency to which it was addressed. At Liverpool there is a great number of zealous Protestants; Liverpool was, therefore, contested on Protestant principles, and commercial differences were, as much as possible, buried in oblivion. When a liberal and popular constituency, like Westminster, was to be gained to the administration, the candidate professed free-trade principles, and said that the ministers had not the least intention of reversing the new commercial policy. In the purely agricultural districts, where all attempts at compromise were rejected, where Sir Robert Peel was still execrated as a traitor, and free trade was still odious, the banner of Protection was hoisted, and ministers were represented as resolute and determined as ever to stand or fall by a Corn Law. Not unfrequently there was seen the extraordinary spectacle of two ministerial candidates within a very few miles of each other asking the support of the electors on the most opposite grounds. In towns, Mr. Disraeli's followers were for free trade, and in the country for Protection.

Nor was this the worst. To one who had advocated such extreme political purity, who had unrelentingly satirised the abuses of the ancient Tories, who had, in the character of Rigby, gib-

beted the vices of the old school of politicians, and shown himself clamorous for high principle, strict consistency, and political faith, such practice, in opposition to such theory, might have been thought sufficiently scandalous. It was not at the time known how much further this new generation of Tories under Mr. Disraeli had gone in the paths of political corruption. It soon appeared that the Secretary-at-War, a privy-councillor to Her Majesty, was implicated in the most direct and wholesale bribery. The Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Augustus Stafford, one of Mr. Disraeli's personal friends, one of the heroes in 'Coningsby,' one of the most enthusiastic of those political regenerators who saw in the acts of Sir Robert Peel's Administration so much to shock the consciences of honourable politicians, and who yearned for the pure Toryism of Bolingbroke, was convicted by a parliamentary committee of the most disgraceful conduct ever laid to the charge of a public man. The patriotic regulations which the former Government had introduced for increasing the efficiency of the maritime service were abandoned. The old jobbing system was restored. The Secretary of the Admiralty accompanied the political candidates of his party to the dockyards. Electioneering dinners, under the head of "Admiralty contin-

gencies," were charged to the public account. And, to make assurance doubly sure, to prove that these proceedings were systematically the practice of the new generation of Tories, this grave resurrection of abuses, and audacious creation of worse abuses than ever before existed, were alleged to have been inspired by the Earl of Derby and Mr. Disraeli. The manner in which Mr. Disraeli met this charge in his voluntary presentation before the committee, was far from complete. He gave a most tortuous and unintelligible explanation. He did not reply to the chairman's questions by a manly and unmistakable "No."

Mr. Croker was at length avenged. He never would have countenanced, as Secretary of the Admiralty, such gross abuses as were brought home to the Secretary of the Admiralty of the Coningsby school of Tories. For ten short months they had an opportunity of proving to the world how far the eloquent professions of the political novel were to be trusted. The personal rancour evinced in the chief political productions of Young England might have justified the most rigid test which could be applied. The least to have been expected was, that they would not have acted worse than their predecessors. Even the most sagacious observers of political life, who

know for what purpose extravagant promises of political purity are made, and what is sure to be their certain result, did not anticipate such reckless misconduct, and such a glaring exposure.

Nor can Mr. Disraeli blame his friends: they served him faithfully, and even blindly. They evidently had no opinions and no system of their own; but they felt confident that their brilliant leader would put all their enemies underneath his feet. He had the same implicit belief. When he addressed his constituents in the course of the general election, he spoke of nothing but their future success, and boldly stimulated that violent excitement into which the public mind had been thrown at such an extraordinary crisis.

A Chancellor of the Exchequer seldom ventures to trust to his imagination. He seldom likes to give bills upon the future. It is the business of a wise statesman rather to moderate than increase the expectations of the people. Mr. Disraeli, in his manifestoes and speeches during the summer, proclaimed himself the great financial reformer of the day. He had devised a plan which was to conciliate all hostile interests, unfetter the industry of the community, and without injuring any person, do good to everybody. As Chancellor of the Exchequer he told England that the good time so long wished for was at last really

coming. The public would see what the new minister, who understood the spirit of the age, and the whole range of the financial system, would do when the Parliament met for the winter. A mighty change in the political world had somehow occurred since he had entered Downing Street. Parties, he said, would no longer contend with their ancient war-cries; they would no longer destroy each other in their inveterate feuds. The whole aspect of our political life was to be changed. To show that his confidence was not ungrounded, before the elections were quite over, Mr. Disraeli announced, and the announcement was received by his friends with the most rapturous delight, that after having carefully pondered on the result of the appeal to the constituencies so far as it was then known, he had not the slightest doubt that the Earl of Derby would open Parliament with an absolute majority.

To the last hour of their lives many people experienced in the study of political affairs must remember the singular condition of the autumn of 1852. The general election was over, and the period fixed upon for the meeting of Parliament was anxiously awaited. What this new scheme might be, how far Mr. Disraeli might go in his financial revolution, were considerations

urgently forced upon the mind. The judicious grieved, as they well might do; for they thought that the finances of a great country were, of all subjects the most dangerous on which experiments and revolutions could be operated. But the credulous adherents of the minister never hesitated. They looked forward proudly to the first division as to a certain victory.

As, however, the 4th of November drew near, they began to be less sanguine. The fever of the elections abated, and a cold fit came on. The approach of the hour of final decision brought even the least considerate to their senses, and it began to be reluctantly confessed that the ministers, notwithstanding Mr. Disraeli's boast, had not really a majority. It was even said that so unequivocal had been the decision of the people in favour of free trade, that the speech from the throne would contain a plain acknowledgment of the fact, and that the Earl of Derby and Mr. Disraeli would still remain in office as Free Traders.

This was a fine termination of all the parliamentary eloquence in favour of the landed interest, and all the interesting paragraphs on strict principles which Mr. Disraeli had bestowed on the world during so many years. A murmur arose from some stern country gentlemen whose

confidence in their leader had been so unlimited. Their discontent was staved off on the first night of the Session. The Queen's speech was full of "ifs." Mr. Disraeli seemed conscious that there was much virtue, and much pacific power in that ambiguous monosyllable. Such an extraordinary speech was never before put into the mouth of the sovereign. As no person disputed the sarcastic abilities of the leader of the government in the House of Commons, this address from the throne read as though he were making game of both Protectionists and Free Traders.

When he spoke on Mr. Villiers's resolutions, he still more boldly set the moral convictions of the House of Commons at defiance. He went so far as to say, that the Protectionists had, after all, never been sincere Protectionists; that they had not attempted to reverse the new policy; that it was only because Protection was the cause of the labourer that he and his friends had ever advocated it; that they now gave it up; that they were fairly beaten, and were not ashamed to admit their defeat. And this, after all the cruel personalities of 1846, and the ungenerous depreciation of the Free Traders in the 'Political Biography' which had been so lately published. Every conscientious man in the House who

witnessed this pitiable scene felt that a great minister, now in his grave, had also given up the cause of Protection, and had acknowledged that he was beaten; and how, many asked, had he been treated by the same individual who was now making this disingenuous confession? Was it just that his bitterest enemies should adorn themselves in his robes, reap the reward of his patriotism, and, since his policy was now to prevail universally, enjoy all his glory, and monopolise the honours of the State? If his slanderer now gave up the cause of Protection, were the Free Traders to forget what was due to the memory of Sir Robert Peel? These burning thoughts were not confined to the opposition. The high-souled nobleman who, as the real leader of the consistent Protectionists, gave utterance to them in some degree, maintained his own honour, and the honour of the fifty-three English gentlemen who followed him into the opposite lobby to Mr. Disraeli.

A great party division was taking place in the House of Commons at two o'clock on the Saturday morning of November 27, 1852. It was the last great Free Trade struggle. Protection was being decently buried, and the last requiem was being chanted over its remains. The final

conflict had all the interest of a regular drama, and was, indeed, the last act of the piece which was commenced in 1846. Then, as now, there was a great division. Then, as now, a minister recanted his professions, abandoned his former opinions, and proclaimed himself a Free Trader. Then, as now, his political friends grumbled, voted against him, and accused him of treachery. And who was the minister who now occupied the same ambiguous position? It was the individual who had been the most unrelenting persecutor of the former statesman; who had raised the first cry against him; who had most bitterly reviled him; and who had exceeded parliamentary decorum in his merciless condemnation of a change of opinion. And for what was this new minister now voting? For a resolution affirming that the "principle of unrestricted competition" should henceforth be the fundamental principle of our commercial policy. There were those friends whose praises he had so often sung, defiling, with downcast eyes before him. There were those men of metal and large-acred squires, whom he so exultingly pictured, as voting on that memorable night, six years ago, against Sir Robert Peel. Only one year had gone by since that brilliant apostrophe was published; and now they were voting against himself. He had been

so proud to lead them; they were the flower of that great party whose cause he had so often pleaded; they had stood by him in the darkest hour; they had borne him from the depths of despair to be the leader of the House of Commons. There was the Marquis of Granby, who had so often been his companion in arms. There was Mr. Newdegate, who abandoned Sir Robert Peel, and was now abandoning his successor. Alas! Napoleon was losing his army. Protectionists, who voted for the principle of unrestricted competition, could no longer be Protectionists. The lobby of the Free Traders was their Moscow. Mr. Disraeli was still the first minister in the House of Commons after the division, as Napoleon was for some time Emperor after his great loss; perhaps, they both, for a moment, indulged in hope; so difficult it is to realize disaster.

Many readers may think that they have met something like this before; and perhaps accuse the author of plagiarism. He has, indeed, borrowed many of these last sentences from the pages in which Mr. Disraeli records so glowingly the defeat of Sir Robert Peel.* They may stand as well for Mr. Disraeli's own defeat, as for that of his old antagonist; for the

* 'Lord George Bentinck: a Political Biography,' pp. 299, 300, 301.

victory over Sir Robert was no victory; but when Mr. Disraeli raised his hand to his face on the portentous majority of 415 being announced to him, though he did not yet comprehend his position, the Emperor was without his army.

The mighty importance of this famous debate was not at first evident. Before the fate of the Administration was finally decided, it fell to Mr. Disraeli's lot, as leader of the House of Commons, to pronounce the national oration of the great English captain, whose death had taken place during the recess. This was such an occasion as a great literary man and orator has seldom had. Such a speech must be a matter for history. It could not be passed over among ordinary events. It was like the funeral oration delivered by Pericles, which stands out in its immortal majesty from the sublime narrative of Thucydides. The carefully prepared harangue was spoken, and proudly pointed at by Mr. Disraeli's friends as a proof of what such an original literary and oratorical genius could do. Those who criticised it impartially found nothing very extraordinary in it; there was no heart, and not much force; but some pretty imagery about laurels and cypresses. It was discovered two days afterwards that this pleasing picture had

been taken, word for word, from the work of a French politician. The undeniable truth was soon proclaimed to the wondering English people, that the leader of the House of Commons, a literary man, an orator, a man who boasted of his originality, had taken all that was really striking in his oration on the great English warrior from the panegyric on a second-rate French general by a second-rate French rhetorician. This is the fact that the historian must record for the instruction of future multitudes of Englishmen. It matters not how it may be explained or excused.

The speech was not long; it occupied only twenty minutes of time when spoken. The rhetorical resources of a man of genius cannot be very extensive, if, with such an opportunity, and for so brief an effort, he is to be permitted to indulge in rhetorical common-places from foreign orators. Cicero, it is true, kept an assortment of common-places ready for use; but they were his own; they were prepared in his leisure hours for his daily use as an advocate at the bar; and he would have disdained to employ them on a great historical occasion, when he was to speak on the merits of a Scipio or a Cæsar. Could he have found a Carthaginian history, with some good sentences on an ordinary Carthaginian general, he would not have thought himself at liberty to recite

them as his own when illustrating the achievements of a great Roman soldier. He would have considered such a national oration as a national disgrace; and the orator who could act such a ridiculous part, truly guilty of "petty larceny on a great scale." But this was not the first of Mr. Disraeli's unscrupulous plagiarisms, nor, though not many months have passed since that time, and the scandal it gave rise to might have deterred him from again opening his wonderful commonplace-book, was it, as will soon be seen, the last time on which he has thought fit to borrow without acknowledgment the eloquence of other men, dead or living, French or English.

It says much for the indulgence with which he was treated even by his political adversaries, that this singular plagiarism in which the honour of England and of the House of Commons was implicated, was never made the ground of a personal attack. Had Sir Robert Peel, in 1846, when he paid such a handsome tribute to the commanders of the Indian armies, stolen his panegyric from any other orator, there can be little question of the use Mr. Disraeli would have made of such a parliamentary misdemeanour.

But the budget was now to be opened. He was to stand or fall by his measures. He

entreated the House to allow him to bring them forward; he pledged himself that they would be found satisfactory to all classes, interests and parties; and there was really much curiosity to know what these miraculous measures might be. Mr. Disraeli had indeed no right thus to base his claim to public confidence on his measures. In this, as in all other cases, he was doing the same thing that he had blamed in Sir Robert Peel. Men and not measures, men much more than measures were Mr. Disraeli's repeated cries when Sir Robert asked the country to accept his measures and forget party contentions. But the House of Commons is seldom ungenerous, and the undeserved opportunity was afforded the reforming financier for developing his much-vaunted scheme.

The speech on the budget was anything but a successful effort. It was one of the most prosaic of orations, delivered with much hesitation, and with evident embarrassment. The structure of the sentences was ungraceful in the extreme; they ran into each other; they were unwieldy and most inartistical. The orator was plainly not at home in his subject; he did not speak as one familiar with financial statistics. There was neither eloquence nor wit in this address. It was throughout cold and formal, occasionally stilted,

and officially pedantic. Two or three slips of the tongue diffused a ludicrous air over some of the gravest passages; and when Mr. Disraeli spoke of the principle of Free Trade, to which he was avowedly conforming, as "the triumph of obsolete opinions," he was greeted with a loud burst of laughter from every part of the House. Much of the matter in the speech had nothing to do with the simple financial topics of deliberation. Mr. Disraeli spoke for five hours; but the effect of his speech would not have been weakened had it been judiciously compressed into one-half of its colossal magnitude.

Examined in detail, this budget had even less to recommend it than the oration by which it was explained. After such mighty promises of originality and novelty, there was little to prepossess any one in Mr. Disraeli's offspring. No new principle, notwithstanding the noise with which it had been heralded, was found pervading it. Whether good or bad, it was as commonplace a budget as any Chancellor of the Exchequer ever produced. Not much genius was shown in these proposed reforms; none of them were novelties; all of them had been frequently recommended by various politicians. What was really original was the eclectic spirit in which these different projects had

been taken from their authors, shaken in a bag together, and presented—a perfect hocus-pocus, Radical measures and Tory measures, schemes of Protectionists and schemes of Free Traders—by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as his new and profoundly original financial reforms to a modern House of Commons. At last the secret of Mr. Disraeli's expected triumph was out. He had hoped to gratify all the different Reformers in the House by carrying out their plans, and thus getting them all to unite together in support of a budget which contained each darling object, with many more cherished conceptions. Mr. Disraeli was the financial Solomon. He called on each parent to divide his child or allow him to adopt it.

The best parts of the budget, and those which were especially to recommend it to Free Traders, were such as Mr. Disraeli of all men ought to have been the last to bring forward. They were opposed to every principle for which he had spoken as leader of the Protectionists. All those schemes which he had recently advocated in the House of Commons were ostentatiously abandoned. This was perhaps the peculiar novelty of the budget. From nothing that its author had ever said could he have been expected to adopt these propositions. The repeal of the Malt Tax

is mentioned in his speeches and novels as an excellent electioneering cry for agricultural districts, but no person ever expected to see him, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, seriously attempt to carry this repeal into effect. It was impossible to say whom it would benefit. Probably not the producer, still less the consumer; it was most likely that those great middlemen, the great brewers, would gain the most of what the revenue would lose. Whatever was really good in this budget might have been effected without any loss at all. The tendency of this revision of taxation was to increase rather than diminish the public burdens, and to sow the seeds of still fiercer animosities, rather than to produce peace among all classes.

'But Mr. Disraeli's speech was a recantation of all the opinions he had so repeatedly pronounced. Not one sentence escaped from his mouth about the ruined West Indian interest, the perishing shipping interest, the agricultural distresses. These great classes were admitted to be contented, and even flourishing. Such admissions were a tacit condemnation both of himself and Lord George Bentinck. There was a most dazzling picture of prosperity, beauty, and glory unrolled before the politicians of every party; and all because Mr. Disraeli was minister, and

hoped to continue minister. The harsh notes of the raven were no longer heard; the sweet warblers of a serene summer, when peace and plenty are spread over the smiling land, united in a thankful jubilee.

That nothing might be wanting to give free play to Mr. Disraeli as the reforming Chancellor of the Exchequer, he could securely count on a surplus of about a million and a half. His hands were not tied behind him; it was his pleasing task to remit taxation; and a Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has to lessen the burdens of the people, is welcomed like a bridegroom: all smile upon him, all shake his hands, and give him their congratulations. To the dismay of every prudent man in the House of Commons, Mr. Disraeli calmly proposed to create a deficiency. Instead of limiting himself to the simple million and a half legitimately within his operations, he undertook the remission of a great tax to which people were accustomed, and the substitution of another to the same amount which would press with peculiar force on all the great towns of the empire. He was resolved that beer should be cheap, and houses dear. One class of the community was to be relieved at the expense of another; and the relief was very equivocal, but the new burdens were certain. It was a simple

sum of subtraction. Two millions and a half of revenue were to be taken away, and two millions and a half to be found from other sources.

But this was not the full extent of the evil. The arguments against the Malt Tax affected it as a whole: in another year the remaining two millions and a half must be repealed, and another tax of equal amount inflicted on the community. Through the chasm which Mr. Disraeli thus wantonly created, all considerate politicians saw a vista of popular discontent and national bankruptcy. The great objection to such changes was, that they were unnecessary; and unnecessary financial changes are always questionable; for revolutions in finance have ever preceded revolutions in constitutions, and the true principle of Conservatism applied as much to one as to the other. An imprudent financial revolutionist was the most dangerous of reformers. He was less to be trusted than the wildest political visionary, or the most reckless of socialist agitators. The finances of England were the buttress of her greatness, and to proclaim a revision of taxation was, indeed, a most imprudent course for any politician to pursue.

These reflections occurred to all sincere Conservatives and all conscientious Liberals. Mr. Disraeli's resolutions were carefully dissected by the trained financiers in the House of Commons;

and on the evening when the decision of the majority was declared, so complete had been the exposure of the budget, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was left without an inch of ground to stand upon. He then turned round upon his opponents, and forgetting the becoming dignity of a minister of the Crown in such a responsible position, endeavoured to make up by personal recriminations for what he wanted in solid argument.

And the game was up. He had made his last desperate attack, and it had been immediately repelled in the most masterly style by the most eminent of Sir Robert Peel's pupils. Poetical justice was dealt out to Mr. Disraeli. He had now the bitter mortification of finding, that after having pledged himself to the principles of Free Trade, given up all that he had fought for during such a length of time, and surrendered at discretion, his sacrifices had been unavailing—"Nemesis" remained unpropitiated, and he had humiliated himself in vain. The Emperor was not only without an army: he had put himself in the power of his bitterest foes: he had lost his brave national guard of Protectionists; he had led a ragged regiment into the citadel of his enemies, and, after laying down his arms, found himself a captive.

CHAPTER XVI.

After his signal downfal as a financial reformer, and the terrible catastrophe of his government, it was thought by some charitable people that adversity might produce a favourable effect on Mr. Disraeli's mind. It was said that his presumption and self-love had been excessively stimulated by his rapid elevation; but that as he was still in the summer of his life, he had yet much time for improvement. It was even rumoured that Mr. Disraeli was himself conscious of having made a great mistake, and was going again to seek inspiration in the East, as surely a Caucasian Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Hebrew race might very well do.

The good people who indulged in such conjectures little knew their man. It is not in Mr. Disraeli's nature to acknowledge his mistakes.

If the real truth could be known, in his heart the author of the 'Revolutionary Epic' still believes that he has written a great poem, still believes that he has most successfully developed the formation of the poetic character, and still believes that he has accomplished whatever he undertook in literature and politics. A paragraph, "by authority," soon appeared in the 'Times' newspaper, contradicting the report which was beginning to be credited. "We are authorised to state," it said, "that Mr. Disraeli had never less intention of absenting himself from his parliamentary duties." This is altogether in Mr. Disraeli's spirit; and as soon as the recess was over, he appeared on the opposition benches, fully determined to pour the vials of his wrath on the authors of his overthrow. Confident in the leadership of the most numerous party in the House of Commons, like the Duke of Wellington with his army, he was sure that he could "go anywhere and do anything." One of his political friends meekly insinuated that this coalition of so many great parliamentary chiefs would evidently produce a strong Government. "Strong Government!" exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, indignantly, "I can turn them out at any time!"

As soon as Parliament met after the Christmas

holidays, and the new ministers were settled in their offices, Mr. Disraeli commenced his attacks. Sir Charles Wood and Sir James Graham had in their speeches to their constituents, spoken somewhat disrespectfully, both of the budget of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of the still more summary proceedings of the French Emperor. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, determined to avenge his own wrongs and those of Louis Napoleon at the same time.

He took an early opportunity of calling the attention of the House to Sir Charles Wood's language, and then, on the very first day of going into a committee of supply, nominally professed to make some observations on the foreign relations of the empire, but really determined to deliver an oration of two hours' length against the new Coalition ministry. The 18th of February must be considered as an epoch in the history of English politics. Until that time English politicians of all parties had ever thought it necessary to be very reserved when speaking in the House of Commons on foreign affairs. Whatever members might say to their constituents on the hustings, the leader of opposition in the House has seldom gone so far as to make elaborate speeches in praise of any monarch or emperor in a time of peace, when all the potentates of the

world with whom Her Majesty enters into relations, must be considered her allies and friends. Mr. Disraeli, on this occasion, made a regular set speech, as the leader of the country gentlemen of England in praise of Napoleon the Third, and declared boldly that the policy of the country, from the most remote ages to the present time, had ever been to regard a good understanding with France as the basis of our foreign policy. This is the most recent, and certainly the most astounding of all Mr. Disraeli's historical paradoxes. It was not a mere crude assertion in a novel. It was not made inconsiderately in a moment of irritation when speaking in reply. It was deliberately proclaimed by him in the presence of all the statesmanship of England, and before all Europe. And it was even cheered by the sons of those brave Tory gentlemen who had so stubbornly supported the ministry of their choice during all the French revolutionary wars, and during the still more dreadful struggle against Napoleon the First, which was terminated on the plains of Waterloo.

There are some assertions, and this is one, which are too obvious to admit of argument. It would seem that the amount of historical knowledge contained in 'Pinnock's Abridgement of Goldsmith's History of England,' must be sufficient

to convince any reasonable man that the policy of England has never been directed to maintain a French alliance. The history of our wars may be called a history of French wars. We have actually never been engaged in any great war which was supported enthusiastically by the people, but it has been a war against France. So much has the national feeling been directed against our neighbours, that even from the earliest times when England first became a nation, and the Norman and Saxon were blended in the Englishman, though our Edwards and our Henrys fought for the crown of France, yet their wars were essentially national and popular.

Of this no Englishman can be ignorant. None can surely deny that the sturdy bowmen at Cressy, Poictiers, and Agincourt, fought for England and St. George. All the pith of our early English history would melt away, if we could doubt for a moment that our brave forefathers contributed their gold and their blood most prodigally for the glory of their country. That they did so, all history teaches us. We have only to look to the subsidies they granted, and the battles they gained over terrible odds, to see, that while they were nominally fighting in the personal cause of the sovereign, they were conquering and dying for England. The old English victories

could never have been won, had they not been national victories. How proud the people were during the time of the Tudors of their glorious annals is shown sufficiently by the historical plays of the mighty Elizabethan dramatist. If ever plays were national, Shakspeare's histories must be; if ever poet ministered at the patriotic altar of his country, Shakspeare did so: all his great epic histories prove that, in the Elizabethan age, France was regarded as a national enemy, and that the victories gained over her armies were such as might justly be considered English victories.

What would Shakspeare or his delighted audiences at the Globe theatre have thought, could they have risen from their graves, and on the eighteenth of last February have listened to the exposition of our traditional foreign policy, by one who aspires to the reputation of a national statesman? What would those bold archers have said, when the glory of our country was dawning so splendidly, could they have believed as they drew their arrows stoutly to the head from behind the palisades at Agincourt, that one day in far distant times, a distinguished politician would declare in an English assembly, that their battle was fought not for England, but for the sovereign merely as a prince of Picardy or Aquitaine, and

that this heroic conflict was not national? What would Queen Mary, who declared on her deathbed that the word Calais would be found engraven on her heart, or her people who were so so indignant at the loss of that trophy which they had held in defiance of France for so many centuries, have thought, could they have realized the idea of an Englishman speaking of "that happy hour when the keys of Calais were fortunately delivered over for ever to the care of a French monarch," for that France had really, according to him, been ever our friend instead of our enemy? What would Sir Robert Walpole, who so indignantly condemned the peace of Utrecht, and said that England was bought and sold at that time by the Tory ministers, have thought, could he have credited that the day would come when it was to be coolly asserted by great authority in the English House of Commons, that he and "the brilliant Bolingbroke," at least agreed in the importance of cultivating a good alliance with France? What would Chatham, who smote the house of Bourbon to the dust; what would Burke, who wrote so wisely and eloquently on the duty of this country to maintain the balance of power throughout continental Europe, and declared that France had, up to that day, ever been considered as a national enemy;

what would William Pitt, whose heart was broken by the battle of Austerlitz; what would all our great commanders, from Bedford and Talbot down to Marlborough and Wellington, whose laurels were all plucked from the brows of French generals—have thought, could they have conjectured that it would ever be asserted that "the most sagacious sovereigns of England and the most eminent statesmen, almost without exception, held that the French alliance, or a cordial understanding with the French nation, should be the corner-stone of our diplomatic system, and the key-note of our foreign policy?"

Mr. Disraeli sees that it is the interest of England and France at the present time to be cordially united. There are very few Englishmen, and certainly not one English statesman, who is not of the same opinion. But not satisfied with basing our foreign relations on the pressing necessities of the age, and the present condition of the world, Mr. Disraeli immediately flies over all the English history to prove that at all times, and under all circumstances, our statesmen had a kind of romantic attachment to France. This is purely ridiculous. It is contradicted by every important fact in history. The policies of great nations are not founded on such fantastic likings. Statesmen have to do with the world as it is in their day,

and their policies must change with the varying circumstances of their generation. The statesmen of each century must act according to the circumstances of each century. Empires rise and fall; some states grow powerful and then decline; human affairs are ever altering. Thus, as Lord Palmerston truly and beautifully observed some years ago, England can have no permanent allies, but then she can also have no permanent enemies. This was speaking like a statesman whose policy must depend on the requirements of his time. To say that in different centuries England has always held the alliance with another nation as the corner-stone of her diplomatic system, is really to suppose that the landmarks of states remain always the same. This is just as absurd as it would be for a sailor to think that the winds always blow in the same direction, and that his vessel must always sail on the same tack.

During the time of Queen Elizabeth, Spain was the dominant European power, and Philip the Second was the bitter enemy of Protestant England. France was then half Protestant, and it was the interest of the two countries to be on good terms with each other, in order to withstand the mighty power that threatened the independence of Europe. Oliver Cromwell, too, made a league with France; but not until after Spain

had declared war against him, and even then Mazarin courted Cromwell more than Cromwell courted Mazarin. The Protector has even been reproached by Hume and others for not checking the power of France, which was then so rapidly increasing. Under Louis the Fourteenth, through all the latter part of the seventeenth century, it was France, and not Spain, that endangered European independence; and after the revolution, England did, as she ought to have done long before, vigorously oppose that gigantic power, and that overbearing monarch who seemed bent on universal empire. Thus the policy of England is found varying with varying circumstances. In the sixteenth century our statesmen united with France against Spain: in the eighteenth century they supported Spain against France. This was true statesmanship; this was true consistency.

By the patriotic exertions of two great monarchs, Peter the Great of Russia, and Frederic the Second of Prussia, other powers of which our earlier statesmen had never dreamed, began to be of great consideration. It was necessary, therefore, in the middle of the eighteenth century, to adapt the policy of England to this new state of affairs. England, under the guidance of Chatham, supported Prussia against a mighty combination. At

the outbreak of the French revolution, and especially when on the broken altar of freedom a military dynasty was inaugurated, and Napoleon led his hosts against Europe, England took her usual place in the van of the mighty conflict for the independence of the world, and even for her own existence as a nation.

After she had chained the imperial eagle to the rock of St. Helena, a new and even more disastrous state of things soon arose. The revolutionary spirit had only been momentarily overcome: it had not, it could not be destroyed by armed hosts, though conducted by the hero of Waterloo. A set of imbecilities filled the thrones of the Continent, and they tottered to their fall. England and Russia alone were quiet, peaceful, and prosperous; and the Cossack in this nineteenth century now threatens, as France and Spain did in former times, the freedom and the nationality of the world. On true principles of statesmanship, therefore, and not on any visionary theory, England may now heartily join with France in resisting the barbarous but mighty power that, could it prevail, would destroy all the boasted civilisation of the West, and precipitate the world back into the chaotic darkness of the middle ages.

On high grounds of policy our country has, in

all those different centuries, ever been consistent with itself. With wealth and influence unprecedented in the world, the English power has never been used to destroy the independence of European nations: England has always been the opponent of the ambitious despots of different countries—Philip the Second, Louis the Fourteenth, Napoleon the Great; and if she is now seen, united with France, standing across the path of the Russian Czar, our statesmen in this are truly conservative and consistent, and follow those great principles of policy which have been consecrated by the genius of England, and transmitted from generation to generation. It is her glory to be hated by the temporary despots of every age, whether Spaniard, Frenchman, Corsican, or Cossack.

This is the only principle on which a statesmanlike alliance can be entered into with France. It is on this principle, and not on Mr. Disraeli's paradoxical theory, that all our statesmen, of all parties, have invariably acted. It places our pacific relations with France on a sound and rational basis. In reply to Mr. Disraeli, it may be expressly affirmed that even the "brilliant Bolingbroke" only acted on the grounds here pointed out, and did not look to France more than to any other nation for the purposes of alli-

ance. After the peace of Utrecht, even Bolingbroke would have indignantly denied that he had any yearning towards a French alliance. When a literary man speaks of another author in the House of Commons, his opinions are generally received with deference. But the truth is, this sentiment which Mr. Disraeli attributes to Bolingbroke, is not to be found in any of his works, and it would be a mere waste of time to prove that the "sagacious Walpole" was never influenced by such a chimerical notion. Bolingbroke was an unprincipled and an unscrupulous statesman; but still he was in some sense a statesman, and not the mere child that Mr. Disraeli would make him appear. Bolingbroke had been Foreign Secretary: he knew well that continental ministers were not to be governed by such a romantic idea as would be ridiculous even in a girl at a boarding-school. In the very last political treatise he ever composed, and which he did not live to complete, the last paragraph contains his opinions on the manner in which our foreign policy ought to be conducted; and there is not one word in favour of this Quixotic French alliance.

One passage from this unfinished political treatise, written in 1749, is worth quoting, that the opinion which Mr. Disraeli attributes to his political demigod may be conclusively shown to

be entirely unfounded. As if anticipating the assertion of such a preposterous notion, Lord Bolingbroke says in this fragment on the state of the nation: "I have heard it often said of one man, that he was a friend or an enemy to the house of Austria; and of another, that he was a friend or an enemy to the house of Bourbon. But these expressions proceed generally from passion and prepossession, as the sentiments they impute must proceed, whenever they are real, from these causes, or from one which is still worse, from corruption. A wise prince, and a wise people, bear no regard to other states, except that which arises from the coincidence or repugnancy of their several interests; and this regard must therefore vary, as these interests will do, in the perpetual fluctuation of human affairs. Thus Queen Elizabeth and her people opposed the house of Austria, and supported the house of Bourbon, in the sixteenth century. Thus Queen Anne and her people opposed the house of Bourbon, and supported the house of Austria, in the eighteenth. The first, indeed, was done with wiser council; the last with greater force of arms."* These sentences are in themselves an answer to Mr. Disraeli. It is clear that Bolingbroke did not entertain the opinion ascribed to him, and that

* 'Bolingbroke's Works,' vol. iv:, p. 393, edit. 1809.

Mr. Disraeli cannot have a very extensive acquaintance with the compositions of this political writer, on whose doctrines the new Toryism is founded, and on which the new apostle so learnedly discourses.

One eminent politician of the last century did indeed once express some views curiously resembling those of Mr. Disraeli. Lord Shelburne, in his old age, when Marquis of Lansdowne, in an able speech denied that France had always been our national foe. He did not make the sweeping assertion of Mr. Disraeli; but an examination of his speech will prove that it is from him the orator borrowed his paradox, and that Mr. Disraeli has followed this statesman in all the historical illustrations which were unfolded to the House of Commons in February last. This is another and the latest instance of Mr. Disraeli's convenient commonplaces, which he is licensed by a great exponent of public opinion to make use of whenever his own stores of rhetoric are exhausted. In the 'Parliamentary History,' vol. xxvi., p. 557, the Marquis of Lansdowne is reported as saying, "The assertions in support of this" (that France was our inveterate enemy) "appear the most extraordinary possible, and were, he conceived, totally without reason. And, first, that France had always been

inimical; for search history, and there could be nothing less founded. Old times were not worth recurring to: they contained feuds and continental wars for French provinces; in fact, were wars of the Dukes of Aquitaine and Normandy against their superiors and vassals, and not the wars of our proper king. This situation of things might be said to expire with the delivery of Calais in Queen Mary's time. What happened afterwards? Queen Elizabeth, a model of wisdom, always valued the French alliance as much as the French did hers. After Queen Elizabeth, the next instance was Cromwell; no Frenchman surely: and yet, like Queen Elizabeth, in alliance with France. In more modern times a very different person than either Queen Elizabeth or Cromwell, Sir Robert Walpole, during his long administration, maintained a constant good understanding with France." If Mr. Disraeli's words on the same subject be compared with this quotation from the 'Parliamentary History,' they will be seen to be, making allowances for the imperfect method of reporting in former times, as close a paraphrase as can be established between one orator and another. Mr. Disraeli takes every one of Lord Shelburne's examples, and does not add a single one of his own. There is a sad want of inven-

tion, or what he himself would call "creation," in thus following implicitly the ideas of another person, and speaking them out as original eloquence. With this passage from Lord Shelburne in the mind, there is something peculiarly ludicrous in Mr. Disraeli's cool rehash of it in his lecture to the House of Commons in 1853. He says, on alluding to the struggle between the two countries in ancient times, "It should be remembered that these were not wars so much between France and England, as between the king of France and the king of England as a French prince; that the latter was fighting for his provinces of Picardy or Aquitaine; and that, in fact, it was not a struggle between the two nations. I take it for granted that, in considering this point, our history need not go back to a more distant period than to that happy hour when the keys of Calais were fortunately delivered over for ever to the care of a French monarch; and when we take that event, which is the real point of our modern history, as one that should guide us on this subject, we shall observe that the most sagacious sovereigns and the most eminent statesmen, almost without exception, held that the French alliance, or a cordial understanding with the French nation, should be the corner-stone of our diplomatic system, and the

key-note of our foreign policy. No one can deny that Queen Elizabeth and the Lord Protector looked to that alliance as the bases of our foreign connexions. No one can deny that there was one point on which even the brilliant Bolingbroke and the sagacious Walpole agreed, and that was the importance of cultivating a good alliance with France."

Mr. Disraeli was too busy borrowing Lord Shelburne's sentiments to pause and explain the fact that the interests of France and England have not always been the same, and, therefore, the nations could scarcely have been always allies. When Holland was overrun, when Louis the Fourteenth was at the gates of Turin, when the Pyrenees were to be levelled, when the glittering eagles of Napoleon were borne triumphantly over the continent, when Austria, Spain, Prussia, and even Russia were prostrate, when the camps of a hostile army might be seen from Dover Castle, and a favourable moment would have brought the French emperor and his troops to London, it would have been ridiculous to talk of a French alliance as "the corner-stone of our diplomatic system." Russia has long been our ally; but Mr. Disraeli is now eager for a war with Russia. If this theory of traditional alliance were to be accepted as right, we ought not

to oppose this "permanent" ally. There is no end to absurdities when we once begin to talk of foreign politics without regarding the actual condition of the world.

It may be a question whether this subject was well chosen for the first assault on the new Administration. Many of the respectable Tories, on whose aid Mr. Disraeli calculated, did not approve of this Gallic mania. There was a flippancy in his manner of discussing affairs of high policy, most objectionable to many grave politicians. But Mr. Disraeli had not yet awoke from his dreams of empire. He was a prisoner; but he was scarcely yet conscious of being a prisoner. He was still in imagination the leader of hosts, the most powerful politician in England.

Mr. Gladstone's budget, the approbation with which it was received, and the majority by which its leading provisions were carried, aroused Mr. Disraeli to the full consciousness of his position. The Government was established. His rival had triumphed. His party was murmuring; its numbers diminishing. First, one amendment to meet the objections of one interest, then another to meet the contradictory objections of another, was produced. Mr. Disraeli's adherents were sadly lessened by this strange course of opposition. "Under which thimble is the pea?" asked the

keen and sarcastic leader of the Whigs. Even the 'Times' newspaper, Mr. Disraeli's old friend, found it necessary to express some plain thoughts on the outrages against public morality which were daily committed by Her Majesty's opposition. No principle of policy, no fair course of action could be traced in their proceedings. They had neither grievance nor cry. They were pledged to the principle of Free Trade, and they could not for very shame again disinter their dead idol, that had lost its charms, and was clearly a block of painted wood, which no human soul could any longer worship.

The new Indian Bill again afforded an excellent opportunity for testing the resources of the leader of opposition. This Bill caused much discontent; it was strongly opposed, feebly defended, and by no person cordially approved. Had Mr. Disraeli really possessed a definite policy, and had his supporters been firmly united, this Indian Bill might have been as fatal to the Coalition Ministry of Russell and Aberdeen, as a former Indian Bill had been to the powerful coalition of Fox and North. But here again defeat and discomfiture awaited the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was opposed by his own late President of the Board of Control: he could only criticise the measure of his opponents, and had

nothing to substitute in its place. A dispute arose between his veteran colleague and himself; Mr. Herries said one thing, Mr. Disraeli another. "This is the manner in which parties are weakened," said the acute leader of the Whigs. And thus it proved. The majority on the budget was great; the majority on the Indian Bill enormous. The opposition was now completely discredited; their mistakes had been ruinous; they grew weaker and weaker every day. The Earl of Derby, in the House of Lords, did not venture to appear in the Indian debate at all; he left the duty of opposition to a subordinate, who conducted the contest so clumsily that he was blamed both by those who opposed and those who supported the Government. Mr. Disraeli was also not at his post on the last night of the Session, and lost the best opportunity he could have had for redeeming in a small degree his disgrace. The proud opposition who were so confident in February, were totally powerless in August. They were left to the last resources of helpless infancy and decrepit senility, peevish abuse of their adversaries, and still more peevish wailing at each other. This is the result of all those profound party tactics, and masterly displays of statesmanship which were to bring back a golden age to the Tories.

They know not who to blame for their mishaps; they do not like to blame their leader; they cannot blame themselves. One of them informed the public, that the reason of their defeat was that they did not all place that perfect "confidence in the Earl of Derby" which would have ensured to them the victory. Faith is doubtless, of wonderful efficacy; it has great power to heal and make strong: but what the Earl of Derby had done to deserve such fanatical devotion, none but an enthusiastic member of the country party can discover.

It is openly acknowledged that the opposition is divided against itself. The "crash of the party" is not only seen and felt, but proclaimed. Mr. Disraeli is placed between two hot fires; he cannot turn either to the right or to the left without much serious risk. The problem for solution is, what has caused this complete overthrow of a great political party? Lord John Russell, when he taunted Mr. Disraeli during the Indian debate, with having no policy of his own, and thus weakening the party, was not far from the truth. To those who have impartially perused these chapters, this disastrous termination of so many hopes, may not be inexplicable. A few direct remarks on Mr. Disraeli's characteristics may render it still more obvious.

As he may be observed sitting on the same bench with the Pakingtons, Walpoles, Staffords, and Beresfords, silent and self-absorbed, seldom exchanging a word with his political colleagues, it is impossible not to believe that he has no high opinion of his associates; and we are reminded of what he said of the statesman in 'Contarini Fleming' who "only required tools." In Mr. Disraeli's opinion, he only requires tools. If others can give acres and social position, he can give all the spiritual qualities, and this is his idea of a party. It is not an association of politicians working together for an avowed end. Party, according to him, is a mere individual following. The leader must be very great; but the rest may all be very second-rate personages. With him the personal is everything. He could not bear to be one among many; and this may in some degree account for his political vicissitudes. It would not perhaps be difficult to show that one reason of his hatred of the Whig party is because it really is a party with many chiefs, and not a mere instrument of individual ambition. Hence, this combination of great nobles is, in his opinion, a Venetian republic; and he does not scruple to attribute motives of the lowest self-interest to the great Whig patriots of former ages, simply because

they acted together. But the moment any man stands aloof from this combination, and attempts to form a party on his own account, although he may be one of the most interested and the most unscrupulous of human beings, he becomes, with Mr. Disraeli, a perfect hero. Hence his admiration of Bolingbroke. Mr. Disraeli appears to consider that great men, if they be Whigs, must, when combined together, be more selfish than when single, and thus, what he admires in the individual, he brands with shame in a party. This is very unphilosophical. It is to suppose that a man is more selfish when he is associated with his equals, than when he is quite alone.

But there sits Mr. Disraeli on those benches, without betraying the least consciousness of the presence of his supporters. The dreary debate drags heavily along; commonplace answers commonplace, the most tedious of which come from the mouths of those sturdy country gentlemen whom Mr. Disraeli's genius has converted into Privy Councillors and Doctors of Laws. On his countenance there is no betrayal of emotion or excitement of any kind.

And now it is ten o'clock; the house is beginning to be crowded, the debate is becoming more

interesting, and must soon be terminated. Seizing an opportunity, this all but inanimate figure jumps bolt upright, and presents itself to the House.

All eyes are turned in the direction of the singular individual, who commences his address in that same passive manner which was characteristic of his previous isolation. He still fixes his eyes on the ground; is still calm and almost imperturbable; while the cheering and the laughter of his supporters seldom appear to have much influence over the orator. The pointed sentence, the apt retort, and too frequently the daring paradox, follow each other; but everything is welcome to his friends, although the speech seems to produce little effect on his opponents. Lord John Russell is laughing, and evidently enjoying the harangue, though for another reason, quite as much as Mr. Disraeli's followers. Two hours pass away, and these sparkling periods become somewhat tedious. At length, after two or three more keen points, the orator raises his voice, and perhaps concludes with some declamatory sentences about the land of England, which are, of course, loudly cheered by country gentlemen.

While listening to this lengthy oration, has the reason or the feeling of the audience been at all overcome? Not in the least. The hearers

have, for the most part, remained almost as impassive as the orator himself; the arguments of his opponents have not been grappled with; he has never appeared to feel much himself, nor has he successfully appealed to the feelings of others. His brilliancy is not warm and animated; there is at the best a cold, almost icy glitter; and after the speech is concluded, it strikes the mind at once that this display, notwithstanding the cheers and laughter of Mr. Disraeli's friends, has been altogether phosphorescent. The orator has established nothing; he has convinced not one individual; he has only made his hearers laugh. His speeches alone would be sufficient to prove that he is destitute of argumentative or reasoning power; and of this want he appears to be himself sensible, for instead of reasoning, he is ever having recourse to his personalities.

Yet it is not by personalities that great truths can ever be established, nor a durable oratorical reputation be founded, still less can they afford an indisputable warrant for statesmanship. The great statesman is never personal. He truly has to do with measures, and not men. With Mr. Disraeli, however, it is just the opposite: men rather than measures, are the objects of his attack, and he seldom, indeed, thinks of defending at all. If ever there was a time when an orator had every

inducement to confine himself strictly to the measures under discussion, it was on the night when Mr. Disraeli rose as Chancellor of the Exchequer to defend those daring financial changes which he had proposed in his budget. Whether for good or evil, the contemplated modifications of taxation were of the utmost importance, and all thoughtful men wished to know the reasons why they were brought forward. Mr. Disraeli rose amid the cheers of his friends. A less convincing speech could not have been delivered on so weighty an occasion by a minister of the crown, and the only passages of real interest were made up of personalities. The question remained exactly where it was before, or rather, it was in a worse situation, for it was surprising that a minister had so little to say in defence of such great measures.

What a contrast to this elaborate oration was that of his rival, Mr. Gladstone! The member for the University of Oxford is the very antithesis of Mr. Disraeli as an orator and politician. Mr. Gladstone is earnest and impassioned, and far excels Mr. Disraeli in all the moral qualifications of the orator; and as the orator is, after all, not a speaking abstraction, but a living being, moral qualifications are indispensable to such a character. The first and greatest of the Pitts was the most effective of English orators, simply because he

possessed in the highest degree those genuine moral, and essentially English thoughts, feelings, and habits, which prevail in every assembly of our countrymen. Mr. Gladstone has also many of those noble qualities that will do more to make him a trustworthy English statesman, than all the studied points of his ready-witted, keen-sighted, and eminently clever antagonist.

The best oratory does not consist in points and sarcasms. The heart has more to do with spoken eloquence than the head. Passion itself, in a well-regulated mind, is wisdom in action. Mr. Disraeli as an orator is passionless. He appears never to be possessed by a great idea. He never considers the cause he espouses of less consequence than his advocacy of it: the cause exists for him, not he for the cause. Every sentence he utters is spoken with deliberation. A frigid apathy steals over the audience even amid all his brilliant periods.

He is not very eloquent. Those who think so may safely be challenged to point out in all his speeches a passage really striking for its force, imagery, and high-toned brilliancy, such as may be selected at once from the speeches of Mr. Sheil or Mr. Macaulay. And as for comparing him to an orator like Burke, it would be absurd. The only very effective parts of Mr. Disraeli's

speeches are his points; the ordinary matter of the rest is as prosaic as that of any parliamentary orator. When he attempts, instead of being sarcastic, to become highly eloquent, he is always bombastic, and we are immediately reminded of the "standing upon Asia and gazing upon Europe," of the 'Revolutionary Epic.' He has no real energy, still less real pathos. It will be found, too, that he is generally less successful on great occasions, when most is, of course, expected. The speech he delivered during the great debate on our foreign policy, in 1850, was far inferior not only to the speeches of Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel, and the transcendant effort of Lord Palmerston, but it was not even equal to those of men whose parliamentary standing was much below that of the champion of the Protectionists. On that occasion there was, perhaps, an excuse for Mr. Disraeli. Notwithstanding political differences, Lord Palmerston is a man whom Mr. Disraeli now admires and fears. He has long forgotten his former contempt for "the Lord Fanny of diplomacy." There are some men against whom brilliant sarcasms fall pointless, and one of them is the lately renowned Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Besides, Lord Palmerston has energy and wit always at his command, and ever ready to chastise those

who attack him, although seldom used for purposes of offence. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, thinks that, though it is easy enough to be mercilessly witty on Sir James Graham, Lord John Russell, and Sir Charles Wood, without much fear of retaliation, with regard to Lord Palmerston, discretion is the better part of valour. It was very amusing to see how, in that singular speech on our relations with France, at the beginning of 1853, while most of the great members of the new Coalition Ministry were individually and collectively attacked, Lord Aberdeen, Lord John Russell, Sir Charles Wood, Sir James Graham, Sir William Molesworth, not the slightest sarcastic allusion was made to Lord Palmerston, who had just been "master of the situation," and was then in the same Cabinet not only with Lord John Russell, but also with Lord Aberdeen.

Mr. Disraeli seldom forgives an injury from second-rate personages; but to one whom he dreads, he will, notwithstanding many injuries, show much Christian humility and loving-kindness, and even give the soft answer that turneth away wrath. O'Connell's memorable crucifixion of "the impenitent thief" might well rankle in the mind even of the best and the most forgiving of human beings. Contrast, however, Mr. Dis-

raeli's forgiveness of O'Connell with his petty rancour against Sir Charles Wood, because Sir Charles advised him "to take back his budget," and was instrumental in defeating that immortal panacea for all the feverish jealousies of rival interests. Mr. Gladstone was even more effective in his attack on the late Chancellor of the Exchequer's measures: he rose after Mr. Disraeli himself, and administered to him such a castigation as has seldom been the lot of an unfortunate Chancellor of the Exchequer to receive, and really influenced votes by that most able and impressive oration, in which more intellectual power was displayed than in any other speech on this memorable occasion. From that moment, while he was enduring the cruel blows of the rival who was directly pitted against him, Mr. Disraeli began to respect Mr. Gladstone, and has ever since been very careful not to subject himself to a similar infliction. He had the mortification of seeing Mr. Gladstone's budget received enthusiastically by the country, and carried by great majorities through Parliament. He had the mortification of listening to the great financial speech of the rival Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of witnessing the palm of oratory and statesmanship snatched directly from

his grasp. What an occasion for a great and redeeming effort was that in opposition to this budget! Mr. Disraeli's all was at stake, and even those who had the least confidence in his pretensions, expected him to give a brilliant reply to his antagonist, who had so greatly contributed to his overthrow, and had risen to power over the prostrate body of this unhappy financial revolutionist. None who heard Disraeli against Gladstone on that night, could for a moment accept the speech as an answer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals. All that Mr. Disraeli could do was to say that Mr. Gladstone had followed his example, ask "Why this jealousy of the land?" and warn the House of Commons against converting a first-rate empire into a second-rate republic. Never was there such a singular opposition. Never was there such a singular speech delivered against such a budget. It could satisfy none but the most inveterate partisans.

Many high-principled Conservatives who were not the usual supporters of the Administration voted with the Government, and the majority was larger than even the ministers themselves anticipated. The speech on the Indian Bill only increased the schism which had begun in the

ranks of the opposition. It had all the defects of the former speech, and was as poor an effort as a leader of opposition ever made.

Oratory is not indeed the only qualification of a great statesman. A man may be a great minister without being a great speaker. But Mr. Disraeli divested of his intellectual attributes is nothing; for he cannot, like Lord John Russell, fall back upon his personal and moral dignity. He was placed in a position in which success could only render tolerable the means by which his power was acquired. As a leading minister of the Crown, or as a prominent leader of a great party of English gentlemen, other qualifications besides those of sarcasm and invective were indispensable. But they were not forthcoming. Mr. Disraeli's sole weapon broke in his grasp, and his party and himself were left defenceless. A powerful English combination, no matter by what name it may be called, cannot exist without some intelligible principle of public policy, and some reverence for the great principles of public morality. As a mere personal following, it must dissolve, at an important crisis, like snow in the beams of the noon-day sun. No effective party can be maintained, either when in office or in opposition, if the leader has one meaning, and his followers another.

Mr. Disraeli has adopted old party names, and given them an interpretation of his own, opposed to all the prejudices of the sincere Tories. When he abandoned the peculiar tenets of his party, and attempted to give it a creed of his own, he was, in fact, giving up all that is vital in Toryism, and leaving no definite idea associated with the name. It may be regretted that we cannot be two things at the same time, and make people adopt our notions; but such is the nature of man, and to this the politician must conform. It has been forgotten in the ardour for party regeneration; and the consequences of making a great traditional connexion the instrument of personal glorification, is now seen on the benches of the opposition.

Mr. Disraeli relied entirely on himself; he never contended on equal terms with first-rate politicians. So unscrupulous and unusual were the methods by which he acquired the leadership of the Tory party, that it was impossible for any able man in the House of Commons to act with him, and follow him in his extraordinary course. He is alone, and must remain alone. How long, however, he may, even nominally, continue chief of the opposition will, probably, depend upon the progress of events. The future is ever dark, and it would be presumptuous to pronounce confidently

on what is likely to happen. But one prophecy may be safely hazarded. After dwelling so long on the different stages of Mr. Disraeli's literary and political life, and finding such a remarkable similarity throughout it, the experience of the past, and the observation of the present, give us no reason to believe that his future political conduct will be very different to what has been, thus far imperfectly, but conscientiously detailed. There is a dramatic consistency in what has been up to this point exhibited; and the hero of the piece will, doubtless, maintain to his latest moment the harmony of his character.

But the strange chaos of parties, with their old objects of contention now deserted, renders the future more than ordinarily perplexing. Politicians are no longer to debate on the comparative merits of Protection and Free Trade. Whig and Tory traditions are no longer to make us forget the precepts of Christianity, and the common bonds of Englishmen. Unmeaning abstractions are no longer to be the symbols of mutual hatred. We are a happy and united people. The old barriers have broken down as the rich flood of national prosperity has poured in. The great commercial, manufacturing, shipping, and even agricultural interests are rejoicing in this energetic advancement of the country. The deluge has

really come; but it is a deluge that fertilises and vivifies, and not one that devastates and destroys. A glittering magnet in another hemisphere has attracted the surplus population of the empire from the alleys in which it was vegetating and threatening, to the rich plains of another land, where it will increase and multiply, without misery or degradation, and add to the glory of England, while forming a youthful empire on other shores. Those awful social problems which perplexed the philanthropist and made the statesman tremble, are, by the interposition of Providence, daily becoming less formidable. Content has its abode in the streets. Patriotism is in the heart of the millions. The croakers who told us that our old national spirit was dead have found themselves deceived. While we love peace, we are proving that we are not afraid of war; and that, rather than sacrifice the honour of England, we are prepared again to bear the burthen of another struggle which may convulse the world, but also assuredly vindicate our national pre-eminence.

Yet though the power of England is great, though her wealth is unexampled, though her energy is mighty, and the valour and industry of her people such as the world has seldom known, the old English morality, such as has hitherto

had its home in the breasts of our statesmen, is more estimable than even wealth, and valour, and industry; for without it all worldly acquisitions are but transient, and all heroic qualities must vanish like a dream. A country may flourish in spite of bad laws, but not in spite of bad morals. Immorality affects the life-blood of a nation. A people will not be taught one system while they see their leading politicians following another. However rugged may be the road to power, it ought to be a straight road, and one by which manly and honourable energy can alone reach the eminence. The way ought to be clear to all the citizens, that each may hail the victor who has courageously struggled upward. The end ought not to blind us to the means. Success ought not to be the only test of merit. But the road by which power is obtained, whether straight or winding, will surely be pursued by all ambitious men. The reputation of the simplest citizen is thus directly involved with that of the eminent politicians of the country; and by these leading spirits will the whole people in other times be judged.

One of the humblest individuals of this great empire has thought it necessary to enter his protest against this new system of morality which threatens to become generally prevalent. He has

regarded it as an imperative duty to develop the life of one who has incorporated in his career these strange principles of public conduct. This book is not the mere expression of an opinion. It is a careful induction from facts, all of which are undoubted and undenied, and some of which are boasted of, and thought deserving of panegyric. It carries its vouchers with it, and courts examination; the more it is scrutinized the more its conclusions will be found correct.

To this hour many of the political fallacies, which abound in Mr. Disraeli's works, have been suffered to escape unrefuted, and they have been perused by the youthful mind of England without having had their consequences pointed out. To render them still more captivating, their professor has been rewarded with the highest political distinctions, and has enjoyed the applause of senates. Mr. Disraeli has appealed to public opinion. He has appealed to the new generation. The author of this book also, on his part, appeals to public opinion and to the new generation. This appeared to be a fitting time for a fair consideration of all these extraordinary tenets, and the more extraordinary manner in which they have been personified. A new and popular edition of Mr. Disraeli's works, at the lowest possible price, has been in publication

during this year. He has not thought it unworthy of him to republish, now in his advanced maturity, such flippant compositions of his youth as 'Popanilla,' and 'The Infernal Marriage.' His celebrity secures their circulation; they are read by those who can discern little of their tendency. His popularity among a certain class of the Oxford graduates is perhaps more pleasing to him even than the confidence of the country squires. He knows well that the author and politician who can secure the confidence of those who are commencing their career, may afford to disregard the distrust of the receding generation.

If Mr. Disraeli deserves the respect of England, and the old maxims of public conduct are wrong, then it is but right that the man who most appropriately represents the spirit of the age should be the most eminent politician. These pages may assist in testing the opinions of his countrymen, for they afford the means of forming an impartial judgment. They bring forward evidence; they establish facts; and, so far, cannot be unwelcome to any one. If the author also discusses those important questions of political philosophy on which a difference of opinion may arise, he submits that there are no views expressed which are violently opposed to those of either Whig or Tory. The rising generation have an oppor-

tunity of considering the old national political theories, and the doctrines of the new school of which Mr. Disraeli is the preceptor.

No trivial object, but all that Englishmen hold dear depends on a just determination. The feelings of an individual are of slight importance when the mighty interests of a great people are concerned. A choice must be made. That it may be a wise one, that they who are to be the men of a new age may not be dazzled by the glitter of brilliant qualities, but reserve their approbation for solid virtues, that public principle may be held steadfast, and political morality be the sole regard of every successful politician, are the sincere wishes of one who has no personal prepossessions, nor any personal motives to mislead his judgment, and who most firmly believes that the doctrines and actions he has commented upon are such as cannot be applauded without profaning the ashes of our forefathers, and sacrificing all the earnest manliness which has in all times been the characteristic of the English politician.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

'*Sun*,' *May 6th*, 1835.

Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Disraeli, the rejected convert to Conservatism.

We see by a report in the 'Dublin Morning Register' of Monday, that at the last meeting of the Trades' Union in Dublin, Mr. O'Connell adverted to the "No-popery" cry, and reflected with much severity on Mr. Disraeli for the terms in which he had designated the hon. and learned member for Dublin in his recent speech at Taunton. "I perceive (said Mr. O'Connell) that at present in England the only chance the Tories seem to have of once more rallying their party is by raising the stale and bigoted cry of "No popery." I believe, looking through the history of England, it will be found that no sources of deep mischief were ever contemplated or actually practised against the people of that country, that were not prefaced, aided, and accelerated by raising the religious and bigoted cry of "No popery," and by endeavouring to frighten them with the horns of the pope (hear, hear, and laughter), in order that those who intended to plunder them might, by thus terrifying them, do so the more easily with safety and impunity. (Hear, hear.) I might go further and say, that the civil wars which ended in the sacrifice, I would call it, and murder of Charles the First, were principally instigated not only by the grievances of the people, which were sufficient, but also by the foul tyranny towards, and apprehension of, the unfortunate English Catholics, who were far too powerless, if

even willing, to effect any species of political mischief. It is a fact of the utmost importance in the history of English Catholics, that they never once rebelled or took any step against their allegiance to the throne, or submission to the constitution, and if they be tarnished, as they are, it is by the cruelty of Queen Mary during her reign in persecuting the Protestants. (Hear, hear, hear.) I feel for the Catholics, however, this consideration, that when she persecuted the English Protestants, the Irish Catholics in particular co-operated in establishing an asylum for them in Bristol, where they actually supported seventy-four families of English Protestants, flying from the persecution of Catholic Mary, and not only kept them safe, but maintained, fed, and clothed them during the entire continuance of that persecution. (Cheers.) Yet, sir, the "No-popery" cry is again raised in England (hear, hear), and every enemy to Ireland in this country does me the honour of directing the arrows of his malevolence against me. But I have risen to a magnitude I never thought I would attain by the quantity of slander poured out upon me, through the medium of the English press. (Hear, hear.) They make me a bugbear of the first magnitude (laughter), though any bug of my size would be a humbug (continued cheering); but literally, nothing is more ludicrous than the importance which they attach to my humble name. I am not accustomed to feel much surprised at their resorting to me for lack of argument; but I must confess there is one of the late attacks on me which excites in my mind a great deal of astonishment. (Hear, hear.) It is this—the attack lately made at Taunton, by Mr. Disraeli. (Hear.) In the annals of political turpitude, there is not anything deserving the appellation of blackguardism to equal that attack upon me. What is my acquaintance with this man? Just this. In 1831, or the beginning of 1832, the borough of Wycombe became vacant, I then knew him, but not personally. I knew him merely as the author of one or two novels. He

got an introduction to me, and wrote me a letter, stating that as I was a Radical Reformer, and as he was also a Radical (laughter), and was going to stand upon the Radical interest for the borough of Wycombe, where he said there were many persons of that way of thinking, who would be influenced by my opinion; he would feel obliged by receiving a letter from me recommending him as a Radical. His letter to me was so distinct upon the subject, that I immediately complied with the request, and composed as good an epistle as I could in his behalf. I am in the habit of letter-writing, sir (cheers and laughter), and Mr. Disraeli thought this letter so valuable, that he not only took the autograph, but had it printed and placarded. It was, in fact, the ground upon which he canvassed the borough. He was, however, defeated, but that was not my fault. (Laughter.) I did not demand gratitude from him; but I think, if he had any feeling of his own, he would conceive I had done him a civility, at least, if not a service, which ought not to be repaid by atrocity of the foulest description. (Hear, hear.) The next thing I heard of him was, that he had started upon the Radical interest for Marylebone, but was again defeated. Having been twice defeated on the Radical interest, he was just the fellow for the Conservatives (laughter); and accordingly he joined a Conservative club, and started for two or three places on the Conservative interest. (Loud laughter.) How is he now engaged? Why, in abusing the Radicals, and eulogising the king and the church, like a true Conservative. (Renewed laughter.) At Taunton, this miscreant had the audacity to style me an incendiary. Why, I was a greater incendiary in 1831 than I am at present, if I ever were one (laughter); and if I am, he is doubly so for having employed me. (Cheers and laughter.) Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to that is—he is a liar. (Cheers.) He is a liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that could tolerate such a creature—having the audacity

to come forward with one set of principles at one time, and obtain political assistance by reason of those principles—and at another, to profess diametrically the reverse? His life, I say again, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind; and England is degraded in tolerating, or having upon the face of her society, a miscreant of his abominable, foul, and atrocious nature. (Cheers.) My language is harsh, and I owe an apology for it; but I will tell why I owe that apology. It is for this reason, that if there be harsher terms in the British language, I should use them, because it is the harshest of all terms that would be descriptive of a wretch of this species. (Cheers and laughter.) He is just the fellow for the Conservative Club. I suppose if Sir Robert Peel had been out of the way when he was called upon to take office, this fellow would have undertaken to supply his place. He has falsehood enough, depravity enough, and selfishness enough to become the fitting leader of the Conservatives. He is Conservatism personified. His name shows he is by descent a Jew. His father became a convert. He is the better for that in this world; and I hope, of course, he will be the better for it in the next. There is a habit of underrating that great and oppressed nation—the Jews. They are cruelly persecuted by persons calling themselves Christians; but no person ever yet was a Christian who persecuted. The cruellest persecution they suffer is upon their character, by the foul names which their calumniators bestowed upon them before they carried their atrocities into effect. They feel the persecution of calumny severer upon them than the persecution of actual force, and the tyranny of actual torture. I have the happiness to be acquainted with some Jewish families in London, and amongst them, more accomplished ladies, or more humane, cordial, high-minded, or better-educated gentlemen I have never met. (Hear, hear.) It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, that I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of

God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also, and it must have certainly been from one of those that Disraeli descended. (Roars of laughter.) He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross, whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. (Roars of laughter.) For aught I know the present Disraeli is descended from him; and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the cross. (Loud cheers, mingled with laughter.)

'*Times*,' *May* 6, 1835.

Mr. DISRAELI and Mr. O'CONNELL.

(No. 1.)

31A, *Park Street, Grosvenor Square,*
Tuesday, May 5.

SIR,

As you have established yourself as the champion of your father, I have the honour to request your notice to a very scurrilous attack which your father has made upon my conduct and character.

Had Mr. O'Connell, according to the practice observed among gentlemen, appealed to me respecting the accuracy of the reported expressions before he indulged in offensive comments upon them, he would, if he can be influenced by a sense of justice, have felt that such comments were unnecessary. He has not thought fit to do so, and he leaves me no alternative but to request that you, his son, will resume your vicarious duties of yielding satisfaction for the insults which your father has too long lavished with impunity upon his political opponents.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Morgan O'Connell, Esq., M.P. B. DISRAELI.

(No. 2.)

SIR, 9, *Clarges Street, Tuesday, May* 5.

I HAVE this day received a letter from you, stating that a scurrilous attack had been made on you by my father, without giving me any information as to the expressions complained of, or when or where they were used, and which I now hear of for the first time.

I deny your right to call upon me in the present instance, and I am not answerable for what my father may say. I called on Lord Alvanley for satisfaction because I conceived he had purposely insulted my father, by calling a meeting at Brookes's for the purpose of expelling him the club, he being at the time absent in Ireland.

When I deny your right to call on me in the present instance, I also beg leave most unequivocally to deny your right to address an insulting letter to me, who am almost personally unknown to you, and unconscious of having ever given you the slightest offence. I must, therefore, request that you will withdraw the letter, as, without that, it will be impossible for me to enter into an explanation.

I have the honour, &c.,

B. Disraeli, Esq. M. O'CONNELL.

This letter will be delivered to you by my friend Mr. French.

(No. 3.)

31 A, *Park Street, Grosvenor Square,*

SIR, *Tuesday, May* 5.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, delivered to me by Mr. Fitzstephen French, by which I learn that you do not consider yourself "answerable for what your father may say."

"With regard to your request that I should withdraw my letter, because its character is insulting to yourself, I have to observe that it is not in my power to withdraw the letter, which states the reason of my application; but I have no hesitation in assuring you that I did not intend that it should convey to you any personal insult.

I have the honour, &c.

B. DISRAELI.

I feel it my duty to publish this correspondence.

(No. 4.)

To Mr. Daniel O'Connell, M.P. for Dublin.

London, May 5.

MR. O'Connell, although you have long placed yourself out of the pale of civilization, still I am one who will not be insulted, even by a Yahoo, without chastising it. When I read this morning in the same journals your virulent attack upon myself, and that your son was at the same moment paying the penalty of similar virulence to another individual on whom you had dropped your filth, I thought that the consciousness that your opponents had at length discovered a source of satisfaction might have animated your insolence to unwonted energy, and I called upon your son to reassume his vicarious office of yielding satisfaction for his shrinking sire. But it seems that gentleman declines the further exercise of the pleasing duty of enduring the consequences of your libertine harangues. I have no other means, therefore, of noticing your effusion but this public mode. Listen, then, to me.

If it had been possible for you to act like a gentleman, you would have hesitated before you made your foul and insolent comments upon a hasty and garbled report of a

speech which scarcely contains a sentence or an expression as they emanated from my mouth; but the truth is, you were glad to seize the first opportunity of pouring forth your venom against a man whom it serves the interest of your party to represent as a political apostate. In 1831, when Mr. O'Connell expressed to the electors of Wycombe his anxiety to assist me in my election, I came forward as the opponent of the party in power, and which I described in my address as "a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction." The English Whigs, who in the ensuing year denounced you as a traitor from the throne, and every one of whom, only a few months back, you have anathematized with all the peculiar graces of a tongue practised in scurrility. You are the patron of these men now, Mr. O'Connell; you, forsooth, are "devoted" to them. I am still their uncompromising opponent. Which of us is the most consistent?

You say that I was once a Radical, and now that I am a Tory. My conscience acquits me of ever having deserted a political friend, or ever having changed a political opinion. I worked for a great and avowed end in 1831, and that was the restoration of the balance of parties in the state, a result which I believed to be necessary to the honour of the realm and the happiness of the people. I never advocated a measure which I did not believe tended to this result; and if there be any measures which I then urged, and now am not disposed to press, it is because that great result is obtained.

In 1831, I should have been very happy to have laboured for this object with Mr. O'Connell, with whom I had no personal acquaintance, but who was a member of the Legislature, remarkable for his political influence, his versatile talents, and his intense hatred and undisguised contempt of the Whigs. Since 1831 we have met only once; but I have a lively recollection of my interview with so distinguished a personage. Our conversation was of great length; I had a very ample opportunity of studying your character. I

thought you a very amusing, a very interesting, but a somewhat overrated man: I am sure, on that occasion, I did not disguise from you my political views; I spoke with a frankness which, I believe, is characteristic of my disposition. I told you I was not a sentimental, but a practical politician; that which I chiefly desired to see was the formation of a strong, but constitutional government, that would maintain the empire, and that I thought if the Whigs remained in office they would shipwreck the state: I observed then, as was my habit, that the Whigs must be got rid of, at any price. It seemed to me that you were much of the same opinion as myself; but our conversation was very general; we formed no political alliance, and for a simple reason—I concealed neither from yourself, nor from your friends, the repeal of the Union was an impassable gulf between us, and that I could not comprehend, after the announcement of such an intention, how any English party could co-operate with you. Probably you then thought that the English Movement might confederate with you on a system of mutual assistance, and that you might exchange and circulate your accommodation measures of destruction; but even Mr. O'Connell, with his lively faith in Whig feebleness and Whig dishonesty, could scarcely have imagined, that, in the course of twelve months, his fellow-conspirators were to be my Lord Melbourne and the Marquis of Lansdowne. I admire your scurrilous allusions to my origin. It is quite clear that the "hereditary bondsman" has already forgotten the clank of his fetters. I know the tactics of your church; it clamours for toleration, and it labours for supremacy. I see that you are quite prepared to persecute.

With regard to your taunts as to my want of success in my election contests, permit me to remind you that I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. No threatening skeletons canvassed for me; a death's head and crossbones were not blazoned on my banners. My pecuniary resources, too, were limited. I am not one of those

public beggars that we see swarming with their obtrusive boxes in the chapels of your creed, nor am I in possession of a princely revenue arising from a starving race of fanatical slaves. Nevertheless, I have a deep conviction that the hour is at hand when I shall be more successful, and take my place in that proud assembly of which Mr. O'Connell avows his wish no longer to be a member. I expect to be a representative of the people before the repeal of the union. We shall meet at Philippi; and rest assured that, confident in a good cause, and in some energies which have been not altogether unimproved, I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will make you at the same time remember and repent the insults that you have lavished upon

BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

'*Times*,' *May* 8.

MR. MORGAN O'CONNELL and MR. B. DISRAELI.

31A, *Park Street, Grosvenor Square,*
May 6.

SIR,

NOT having been favoured with your reply to my second letter of yesterday, I thought fit to address a letter to your father, and for this reason:—I deduce from your communication, delivered by Mr. French, that you do not consider yourself responsible for any insults offered by your father, but only bound to resent the insults that he may receive. Now, Sir, it is my hope that I have insulted him; assuredly it was my intention to do so: I wished to express the utter scorn in which I hold his character, and the disgust with which his conduct inspires me. If I failed in conveying this expression of my feelings to him, let me more successfully express them now to you. I shall take every opportunity of holding your father's name up to public contempt; and I fervently pray that you, or some one of his blood, may

attempt to avenge the unextinguishable hatred with which I shall pursue his existence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Morgan O'Connell, Esq., M.P. B. DISRAELI.

SIR, *May 7th.*

I HAVE this moment received your letter of the 6th inst., which was left at Clarges Street, during my absence, at half-past eleven last night. Your letter of the 5th instant, in which you declare that you "did not intend to convey to me any personal insult," followed by a publication of which you gave me notice, induced me to think that the matter was concluded between us. The tenour of your last letter is such, that it is impossible for me to renew the correspondence.

In the postscript of your letter of the 5th inst., you state that you feel it your duty to publish the correspondence. In accordance with that view, I send your last communication and reply to the press.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

B. Disraeli, Esq. MORGAN O'CONNELL.

(No. 2.)

'*Times*,' *December* 28, 1835.

To the EDITOR of the TIMES.

SIR,

THE editor of the 'Globe,' in his paper of Friday, stated that I had applied to Mr. O'Connell to return me to Parliament as a joint of his tail, which is an utter falsehood, and substantiated his assertion by a pretended quotation

from my letter in inverted commas, which is a complete forgery. I called the attention of the editor of the 'Globe' to these circumstance in courteous language, and the editor of the 'Globe' inserted my letter in his columns, suppressing the very paragraph which affected his credit.

The editor of the 'Globe,' accused of a falsehood and convicted of a forgery, takes refuge in silly insolence. It tosses its head with all the fluttering indignation and affected scorn of an enraged and supercilious waiting-woman. It is the little Duke of Modena of the press, and would rule Europe with its sceptre of straw, and declare a general war by the squeak of a penny trumpet. But its majestic stalk turns out to be only a waddle, and its awful menace a mere hiss. As for "breaking butterflies on a wheel," this is the stock simile of the 'Globe,' an image almost as original as the phœnix, and which I have invariably observed in controversy is the last desperate resource of confuted common-place and irritated imbecility.

An anonymous writer should, at least, display power. When Jupiter hurls a thunderbolt, it may be mercy in the god to veil his glory with a cloud; but we can only view with feelings of contemptuous lenity the mischievous varlet who pelts us with mud as we are riding by, and then hides behind a dust-hole.

The editor of the 'Globe,' I am assured, has adopted the great Scipio Africanus for his illustrious model. It is to be hoped that his Latin is more complete than his English, and that he will not venture to arrest the attention of admiring senates in a jargon which felicitously combines the chatter of Downing Street with the bluster of the Strand.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

your very obedient Servant,

B. Disraeli.

Dec. 26, 1835.

'*Times*,' *December* 31, 1835.

To the EDITOR of the 'TIMES.'

SIR,

I HAVE often observed that there are two kinds of nonsense—high nonsense and low nonsense. When a man makes solemn accusations which he cannot prove, quotes documents which are not in existence, affects a contempt which he cannot feel, and talks of "breaking butterflies on a wheel," I call this high nonsense. When the same individual, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, writhing under a castigation which he has himself provoked, and which he will never forget, utters at the same time half an apology and half a snivelling menace, and crowns a rigmarole detail, which only proves his own capacity of reasoning by a swaggering murmur of indifference worthy of Bobadil after a beating, I call this low nonsense. The editor of the 'Globe' is a consummate master of both species of silliness. Whether the writer of the articles of the 'Globe' be a member of parliament, as is formally asserted every week by a journal of great circulation, and which has never been contradicted, or whether he be a poor devil who is paid for his libel by the line, is to me a matter of perfect indifference. The thing who concocts the meagre sentences, and drivels out the rheumy rhetoric of the 'Globe,' may in these queer times be a senator, or he may not; all I know is, if the Whigs cannot find a more puissant champion to attack me than the one they have already employed, I pity them. Their state is more forlorn than ever I imagined. They are now in much the same situation as the good Lady Bellenden with her well-accoutred cavalier; at the first charge he proves, after all, only to be Goose Gibbie. I will not say, with Macbeth, that I shall fall by "none of woman born," but this I will declare, that the Whig Samson shall never silence me by "the jaw of an ass." The editor of the

'Globe' talks, Sir, of our united thunder; I cannot compliment him, and all his members of parliament, even on a single flash of lightning. On Friday, indeed, there was a sort of sparkish movement in his lucubrations, which faintly reminded me of the frisky brilliancy of an expiring squib; but on Monday he was as flat and as obscure as an Essex marsh, unillumined by the presence of even a single ignis fatuus.

I did not enter into a controversy with the editor of the 'Globe,' with the inglorious ambition of unhorsing a few Whig scribblers—these are indeed "small deer," but because I thought there was a fair chance of drawing our gobemouche into making a specific accusation, which I have long desired, and of ridding myself of those base inuendoes, and those cowardly surmises with which the most gallant cannot engage, and which the most skilful cannot conquer. The editor of the 'Globe' has realized my most sanguine expectations. Like all vulgar minds, he mistook courtesy for apprehension, and, flushed and bloated with the anticipated triumph of a dull bully, he permitted me by his base suppression to appeal to your ready sense of justice, and thus has afforded me an opportunity of setting this question at rest for ever.

It turns out that the sole authority of the 'Globe' for its bold and detailed assertions is Mr. O'Connell's speech at Dublin, which the editor declares that I have never answered. I thought my answer to Mr. O'Connell was sufficiently notorious; I believe it is universally acknowledged, among all honest folks, that Mr. O'Connell, as is his custom, had the baseness first to libel me, and then to skulk from the consequences of his calumny. However, to put the 'Globe' out of court on this head, I here declare that every letter of every syllable of the paragraph quoted in its columns from Mr. O'Connell's speech is an unadulterated falsehood—from my novels, which the *de facto* member for Dublin learnedly informs us, are styled the Curiosities of Literature, to his

letter to me, which was never written, and which he assures us was lithographed throughout Wycombe.

I asserted in the 'Globe' that I professed at this moment precisely the same political creed as on the hustings of Wycombe: I am prepared to prove this assertion. I was absent from England during the discussions on the Reform Bill. The Bill was virtually, though not formally, passed when I returned to my country in the spring of 1832. Far from that scene of discord and dissension, unconnected with its parties, and untouched by its passions, viewing, as a whole, what all had witnessed only in the fiery passage of its intense and alarming details, events have proved, with all humility be it spoken, that the opinion I formed of that measure on my arrival was more correct than the one commonly adopted. I found the nation in terror of a rampant democracy. I saw only an impending oligarchy. I found the House of Commons packed, and the independence of the House of Lords announced as terminated. I recognised a repetition of the same oligarchical *coups d'état* from which we had escaped by a miracle little more than a century before; therefore I determined to the utmost of my power to oppose the Whigs.

Why then, it may be asked, did I not join the Tories? Because I found the Tories in a state of ignorant stupefaction. The Whigs had assured them that they were annihilated, and they believed them. They had not a single definite or intelligible idea as to their position or their duties, or the character of their party. They were haunted with a nervous apprehension of that great bugbear "the people," that bewildering title under which a miserable minority contrives to coerce and plunder a nation. They were ignorant that the millions of that nation required to be guided and encouraged, and that they were that nation's natural leaders, bound to marshal and to enlighten them. The Tories trembled at a coming anarchy; what they had to apprehend was a rigid tyranny. They fancied themselves on the eve of

a reign of terror, when they were about to sink under the sovereignty of a Council of Ten. Even that illustrious man, who, after conquering the Peninsula, ought to deem nothing impossible, announced that the king's government could not be carried on. The Tories in 1832 were avowedly no longer a practical party; they had no system and no object; they were passive and forlorn. They took their seats in the House of Commons after the Reform Act as the Senate in the Forum, when the city was entered by the Gauls—only to die.

I did not require Mr. O'Connell's recommendation, or that of any one else, for the borough the suffrages of whose electors I had the honour to solicit. My family resided in the neighbourhood. I stood alike on local influence and distinctly avowed principles, and I opposed the son of the prime minister. At the first meeting of the electors I developed those views, which I have since taken every opportunity to express, and which are fully detailed in my recent letter to Lord Lyndhurst. Opposition to the Whigs at all hazards, and the necessity of the Tories placing themselves at the head of the nation, were the two texts on which I preached, and to which I ever recurred; the same doctrines are laid down in my letter to the electors of Marylebone. The consequence of this address was, that all the Tories of the town, and all those voters who were not Whigs, but who from a confusion of ideas were called Radicals, offered me their support. Did this gratifying result prove my inconsistency? I think I may assert it only proved the justness of my views, and the soundness of my arguments. If the Tories and Radicals of England had united, like the Tories and Radicals of Wycombe, four years ago, the oligarchical party would long since have been crushed; had not the Tories and a great portion of the Radicals united at the last general election, the oligarchy would not now have been held in check. Five years hence I

trust there will not be a Radical in the country; for if a Radical mean, as it can only mean, one desirous to uproot the institutions of the country, that is the exact definition of a Whig.

My opinions were specifically expressed in my subsequent address to the electors. I believe, Sir, it has appeared in your columns. I called upon the electors to support me in a contest with a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction, hostile alike to the liberties of the subject, and the institutions of the country.

And now, Sir, for Mr. O'Connell. Mr. O'Connell, in 1832, was in a very different situation to Mr. O'Connell in 1835. The 'Globe,' which historically informs us that in 1832 I was to become a member of Mr. O'Connell's tail, forgets that at that period Mr. O'Connell had no tail, for this was previous to the first general election after the Reform Act. Mr. O'Connell was not then an advocate for the dismemberment of the empire, the destruction of the church, and the abolition of the House of Lords. His lips overflowed with patriotism, with almost Protestant devotion to the establishment, with almost English admiration of the constitution. Our contest at Wycombe was a very warm one, every vote was an object. A friend of mine, interested in my success, knowing that I was supported by that portion of the constituency styled Radicals, applied to Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to know whether they had any influence in Wycombe, and requested them to exercise it in my favour. They had none, and they expressed their regret in letters to this gentleman, who forwarded them to me at Wycombe; and my committee, consisting of as many Tories as Radicals, printed them: this is the history of my connection with Mr. O'Connell.

Even had it been in the power of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume to have interposed in my favour at Wycombe, my political allegiance would not have been the expected consequence of their assistance. Those gentlemen would have

aided me from the principles I professed, and the measures I advocated in my address, and with a perfect acquaintance of the political position which I had assumed. They knew, at least one of them, that I had declined a distinct recommendation to another constituency, where my return would have been secure, because I avowed my resolution to enter the House of Commons unshackled; they were perfectly aware that the Tory party supported me in the borough, because some members of the ministry, panting and pale, had actually knocked them up one night to request them to exert their influence against me on that score; and they were well apprised that if I were returned I should offer a hostility without exception to every measure proposed by the Government.

The truth is, that Mr. Hume and Mr. O'Connell already stood aloof from the Whigs, and the least prescient might detect that they already meditated that furious opposition in which, in the course of a few months, they had embarked. They were not anxious to see the Whigs too strong; they would not have regretted to witness the return of a member whose hostility to the administration was uncompromising, particularly as they knew that I was really independent, totally unconnected with the Tory party, and considered of importance. I, on the other hand, had good reasons to recognize in these gentlemen and their connections the brooding elements of an active opposition—the seeds of a combination which, in the then state of affairs, I considered indispensable, and the only means of salvation to the country: and, had I been returned to parliament in 1832, I should have considered it my duty to support them in most of their measures, and especially their hostility to the Coercion Bill.

It had been asserted that I stood upon Radical principles. Why, then, did the Whigs oppose me as a Tory? I challenge any one to quote any speech I have ever made, or one line I have ever written, hostile to the institutions of the country; on the contrary, I have never omitted any

opportunity of showing, that on the maintenance of those institutions the liberties of the nation depended; that if the Crown, the Church, the House of Lords, the corporations, the magistracy, the poor laws, were successfully attacked, we should fall, as once before we nearly fell, under a grinding oligarchy, and inevitably be governed by a metropolis. It is true that I avowed myself the supporter of triennial Parliaments, and for the same reasons as Sir William Wyndham, the leader of the Tories against Walpole—because the House of Commons had just been reconstructed for factious purposes by the Reform Act, as in the days by the Septennial Bill, I thought with Sir William Wyndham, whose speech I quoted to the electors, that the Whig power could only be shaken by frequent elections. Well, has the result proved the shallowness of my views? What has shaken the power of the Whigs to the centre? The general election of this year. What will destroy the power of the Whigs? The general election of the next. It is true that I avowed myself a supporter of the principle of the ballot. Sir William Wyndham did not do this, because in his time the idea was not in existence, but he would, I warrant it, have been as hearty a supporter of the ballot as myself, if, with his principles, he had been standing on the hustings in the year of our Lord 1832, with the third estate of the realm reconstructed for factious purposes by the Whigs, the gentlemen of England excluded from their own chamber, a number of paltry little towns enfranchised with the privilege of returning as many members to Parliament as the shires of this day, and the nomination of these members placed in a small knot of hard-hearted sectarian rulers, opposed to everything noble and national, and exercising an usurious influence over the petty tradesmen, who are their slaves and their victims.

These were the measures which, in the desperate state of our commonwealth in 1832, I thought might yet preserve the liberties of this country, expecting, as I did, to receive every

day a bulletin of a batch of 100 new peers; and that the Whigs of 1832, after having emulated, in regard to the independence of the House of Commons, the machinations of the Whigs of 1718, would be even more successful than their predecessors in their plots against the independence of the House of Lords.

I was unsuccessful in my election. The son of the prime minister beat me by some votes under twenty. The Whigs managed to get him elected by the influence of "a great public principle." This "great public principle" was more intelligible than the one which seated Mr. Abercromby in his chair. My opponent was selected out of "gratitude" to Lord Grey. In future I suppose he will be returned out of "ingratitude" to Lord Grey, for that seems more the fashion now.

More than three years after this came my contest at Taunton against the Master of the Mint, to which the editor of the 'Globe' has alluded. I came forward on that occasion on precisely the same principles on which I had offered myself at Wycombe; but my situation was different. I was no longer an independent and isolated member of the political world. I had felt it my duty to become an earnest partisan. The Tory party had in this interval roused itself from its lethargy; it had profited by adversity; it had regained not a little of its original character and primary spirit; it had begun to remember, or to discover, that it was the national party of the country; it recognised its duty to place itself at the head of the nation; it professed the patriotic principles of Sir William Wyndham and Lord Bolingbroke, in whose writings I have ever recognised the most pure and the profoundest sources of political and constitutional wisdom; under the guidance of an eloquent and able leader, the principles of primitive Toryism had again developed themselves, and the obsolete asseciations which form no essential portion of that great patriotic scheme had been ably and effectively discarded. In the great struggle I

joined the party with whom I sympathised, and continued to oppose the faction to which I had ever been adverse. But I did not avow my intention of no longer supporting the questions of short Parliaments and the ballot, merely because the party to which I had attached myself was unfavourable to those measures, though that, in my opinion as to the discipline of political connexions, would have been a sufficient reason. I ceased to advocate them because they had ceased to be necessary. The purposes for which they had been proposed were obtained. The power of the Whigs was reduced to a wholesome measure; the balance of parties in the State was restored; the independence of the House of Lords preserved. Perpetual change in the political arrangements of countries of such a complicated civilization as England, is so great an evil, that nothing but a clear necessity can justify a recourse to it.

The editor of the 'Globe' may not be able to comprehend these ideas. I am bound to furnish my antagonists with arguments, but not with comprehensions. The editor of the 'Globe' I take to be one of that not inconsiderable class of individuals ignorant of every species and section of human knowledge. His quavering remarks on my letter to Lord Lyndhurst convince me that he is as ignorant of the history of his own country as of that of the Pre-Adamite sultans. The smile of idiot wonder with which he learned for the first time that there were Tories in the reign of Queen Anne could only be commemorated by Hogarth. For once his pen seemed gifted with the faculty of expression, and he has recorded in his own columns a lively memento of his excited doltishness. What does it signify? His business is to chalk the walls of the nation with praises of his master's blacking. He is worthy of his vocation. Only it is ludicrous to see this poor devil whitewashing the barriers of Bayswater with the same self-complacency as if he were painting the halls of the Vatican.

The Whigs are now trying to cheer their spirits by their

success in the corporation elections, as if the temporary and inevitable results of personal and local pique were to be attributed to their influence. How are the mighty fallen! Four years ago the Whigs were packing a parliament; now they are content to pack a town council. After having nearly succeeded in ruining an empire, these gentlemen flatter themselves that they may still govern a parish.

I am not surprised, and assuredly not terrified, by the hostility of the Whigs. They may keep me out of parliamen, but they cannot deprive me of one means of influencing public opinion as long as in this country there is a free press; a blessing which, had they succeeded in Louis Philippizing the country, as they intended, would not, however, have long afforded us its salutary protection. I feel that I have darted at least one harpoon in the floundering sides of the Whig leviathan. All his roaring and all his bellowing, his foaming mouth, and his lashing tail, will not daunt me. I know it is the roar of agony, and the bellow of anticipated annihilation, the foam of frenzy, and the contortions of despair. I dared to encounter the monster when he was undoubted monarch of the waters, and it would indeed be weakness to shrink from a collision with him now, in this merited moment of his awful and impending dissolution.

I have trespassed, Sir, too much on your truly valuable columns, but I am sensible of the indulgence, and have the honour to remain,

Sir, your very obliged and

Obedient Servant,

December 28, 1835. B. DISRAELI.

'*Globe*,' *December* 26, 1835.

We have the honour to receive a communication from Mr. Benjamin D'Israeli the Younger, which sets forth as follows:—

"Sir,—My attention has this instant been called to the leading article of your paper of yesterday, in which you have made some statements respecting me, which are completely erroneous."

Mr. D'Israeli then proceeds to state why he does not use "a stronger phrase," and condescends to say he believes we adopted our views of his acts and opinions "on hearsay," and did not "invent," the grounds of our judgment. Assuredly we did not invent them; but neither did we adopt our views about them "on hearsay."

"Your assertions," proceeds Mr. D'Israeli, "that I applied to Mr. O'Connell to return me to Parliament, and that he treated that application with irreverent and undisguised contempt, are quite untrue. I never made any application to Mr. O'Connell to return me to Parliament; and the only time I ever met Mr. O'Connell, which was in society, he treated me with a courtesy which, I trust, I returned.

"As you have fallen into such remarkable errors as to facts, it is not surprising that you should be even less accurate as to opinions: permit me to say that mine have never changed. My letter to Lord Lyndhurst just published, to which you allude, contains the opinions with which I entered political life four years ago; opinions which I adopted when the party I opposed appeared likely to enjoy power for half a century; opinions which, I hope, half a century hence, I may still profess.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

B. D'Israeli.

We echo very cordially the hope of Mr. D'Israeli, that fifty years hence, he "may still profess" opinions of any

sort. We would add the humble ejaculation—"May we be there to see!" The compliments of the season, and many happy returns of it to us both will then be pretty fully realised. Mr. D'Israeli's confidence in his longevity is, we trust, better founded than his reliance on his future consistency, if we may judge from the past. Of that past we must, we suppose, say a word or two more after his challenge, though we said our say of it months ago, without contradiction; and our tenderness towards volatile insects disinclines us to break a butterfly on a wheel oftener than necessary. "Fifty years hence," Mr. D'Israeli and we shall, we trust, be better friends; though, by the way, his sanguine prospect of attaining that period convinces us that he is, as we supposed, not only "the younger," but "the youngest" of the Disraelis.

'Times' Newspaper, January 9th, 1836.

To the EDITOR of the 'TIMES.'

SIR,

I HAVE heard of a man at Waterloo who contrived to fight on some little time after his head was shot off. This is the precise situation of the editor of the 'Globe;' he continues writing as the other continued fighting, without any brains; but the least skilful can in a moment detect that his lucubration of last night is not the result of any intellectual exertion, but merely of a muscular motion.

After a week's trembling silence, the editor of the 'Globe' has drivelled out nearly three columns of dead man's prose, and, with the aid of a hysterical giggle about a misprint of a single letter in my last communication to you, would fain persuade us he is still alive. But we all know that the editor of the 'Globe' is veritably deceased, and this letter must only be considered as a part of his funeral obsequies.

I need not notice my "awful declaration" about the

Whigs, which the ghost of the 'Globe' has quoted, because these words were never uttered by me, and because at the time they were peremptorily contradicted in your journal, twenty-four hours after they were anonymously asserted to have been expressed. No one ever attempted to substantiate them, and the lie died away like many others. As for the extracts from my address, to which the spectre has also appealed, I beg to inform the apparition that I have not "thrown over" any of the excellent objects which are enumerated in it. The Reform Bill may be, as the editor of the 'Globe' for once pertinently expresses it, a dishonest trick of the oligarchical Whigs but it does not follow that, like many other tricks, it may not lead to consequences which the tricksters never anticipated.

As for the hon. member for Middlesex, he has never attacked me, and I have therefore ever felt bound by the courtesy of society not to introduce the name of that gentleman into these discussions more than was absolutely necessary; but do not let the editor of the 'Globe' again commit his old error, and attribute to apprehension what courtesy alone prompted. I repeat, that Mr. Hume's letter, to which the editor of the 'Globe' originally alluded, was addressed to a third person, four-and-twenty hours after it appeared at Wycombe. By some extraordinary circumstance, a letter written by the same gentleman was circulated there in favour of Colonel Grey, by the committee of my gallant opponent. Whatever might be the value of Mr. Hume's letter, I did not choose to pass by in silence a proceeding which appeared to every one very extraordinary, therefore I instantly saw Mr. Hume, who afforded me a satisfactory explanation. He afforded it to me by way of letter, and concluded that letter with the expressions quoted by the ingenious editor of the 'Globe.' This letter was necessarily printed; but this is not the letter which has been appealed to in this controversy. All the details about my introduction to Mr. Hume, with a letter from Mr. Bulwer,

and my frequent conferences with Mr. Hume at his house, are, as usual with the 'Globe,' utter falsehoods. I never saw Mr. Hume but once in my life, and that was at the House of Commons; the object of that interview was to request an explanation of the circumstance which I have mentioned, and to that circumstance the interview was confined.

The same reason that deterred me from unnecessarily introducing the name of Mr. Hume, precludes me from noticing the anonymous insinuations of the editor of the 'Globe' respecting Lord Durham; and only that reason.

Like the man who left off fighting because he could not keep his wife from supper, the editor of the 'Globe' has been pleased to say, that he is disinclined to continue this controversy because it gratifies my "passion for notoriety." The editor of the 'Globe' must have a more contracted mind, and paltrier spirit, than even I imagined, if he can suppose for a moment, that an ignoble controversy with an obscure animal like himself, can gratify the passion for notoriety of one whose works at least have been translated into the languages of polished Europe, and circulate by thousands in the New World. It is not then my passion for notoriety that has induced me to tweak the editor of the 'Globe' by the nose, and to inflict sundry kicks upon the baser part of his base body; to make him eat dirt, and his own words, fouller than any filth; but because I wished to show to the world what a miserable poltroon, what a craven dullard, what a literary scarecrow, what a mere thing, stuffed with straw and rubbish, is the soi-disant director of public opinion and official organ of Whig politics.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

B. DISRAELI.

January 8th.

'*Times*,' *January* 12, 1836.'

To JOSEPH HUME, Esq., M.P.

SIR,

YOU have, at length, dropped the mask; and, in becoming my avowed asailant, you permit me to relate circumstances which would, long ago, have silenced the idle controversy with which the evening organ of Whig politics has attempted to cloak its recent disgraceful discomfiture. I have mentioned in my letter to the editor of the 'Times' that I have only met you once, and that was at the House of Commons: it appears you were then attending the Indian Committee; you know very well under what circumstances I was forced to apply to you personally on that occasion you know you had conducted yourself towards me in a manner which was not only a violation of all the courtesies, but of the common honesty of life; you know the extreme difficulty which I had in extracting from you a satisfactory explanation, and I cannot forget, though you may, the offers of service which on that occasion you made me, and which I declined. Some months after this, a vacancy, which never occurred, being threatened in the borough of Marylebone, I announced myself in opposition to the Whig candidate, who was already in the field. In the course of my canvass, I called upon Mr. Joseph Hume, an influential elector of that borough, one, too, recently so profuse in his offers of service, and now in violent opposition to that party which I had ever resisted; you were, I was informed, severely indisposed; you were not even seen by me, but I explained to your clerk or secretary the object of my visit, and, that no error might occur, I wrote a letter in your house, which I delivered to that secretary; doubtless, being a canvassing epistle, it was sufficiently complimentary. It is obvious you take very good care of these documents, but why is not this letter produced? because it would have explained how your secretary remem-

bered my calling at your residence, and because it would have confirmed my previous account; and when I did call, I had not the honour of seeing yourself. Your "impression" that I did call upon you in Bryanston-square at the beginning of your letter, at the end of your communication swells into certainty. Why were you more certain at the termination of your epistle than at the beginning? Were you strengthened by your secretary's recollection of me? I have shown how we chanced to meet; the truth is you wished to confirm an anonymous libeller in his statement, that I had sought a formal interview with you before I became a candidate at Wycombe, and it is obvious, from the cautious mendacity at the commencement of your letter, that you were aware that you were countenancing a lie.

But I have not done with you. Whether you wrote a letter of me or to me at Wycombe, whether I saw you when I called at your house or not, whether we met half a dozen times or only once, what, after all, has this miserable trifling to do with the merits of the question? This controversy commenced by the evening organ of the Whigs being instructed by its masters to attack and answer my 'Vindication of the English Constitution;' the unlettered editor of the 'Globe,' as ignorant of the history as he is of the language of his country, puzzled and confounded, sought refuge in the vile and vulgar expedient of personally abusing the author; if he cannot redeem his oft-repeated bluster of reputation, let his masters hire another, and abler, hack to baffle that exposure of the plots and fallacies of their unprincipled faction. The illogical editor of the 'Globe', incompetent to distinguish between principles and measures, accused me of political tergiversation, because with the same principles as I had ever professed I was not of opinion that in 1835 two particular measures were necessary which I deemed expedient in 1832. I stated my reasons why I no longer deemed those measures expedient. The editor of the 'Globe' has never answered them, but if the editor of the 'Globe' require any

further information on this subject, if he be still anxious to learn how it may be possible, without any forfeiture of political principles, to hold different opinions at different seasons respecting political measures, I refer him to his patron, Lord John Russell, the whilome supporter of triennial parliaments; or his ancient master, Lord Spencer, the umquhile advocate of the ballot. If these right honourable personages cannot succeed in introducing a comprehension of this subject into the unparalleled skull of the editor of the 'Globe,' why then he must even have recourse to that Magnus Apollo of the Treasury bench, Sir John Hobhouse, who will doubtless make it most lucidly obvious to him how a man who commences a political career, pledged to annual parliaments and universal suffrage, may duly dwindle into a low Whig upholder of a senatorial existence of seven years, and a suffrage limited to the mystical boundary of a ten-pound franchise.

But, Sir, as you are so happy in addressing letters to the editor of the 'Globe,' and since your political consistency is so universally acknowledged, that you, as you classically express it, cannot put pen to paper without producing some fresh evidence of public integrity, permit me to ask you what is your opinion of the consistency of that man who, after having scraped together a fortune by jobbing in Government contracts in a colony, and entering the House of Commons as the Tory representative of a close corporation, suddenly becomes the apostle of economy and unrestricted suffrage, and closes a career, commenced and matured in corruption, by spouting sedition in Middlesex, and counselling rebellion in Canada?

Your obedient Servant,

B. DISRAELI.

34, *Upper Grosvenor-street,*
Monday evening.

'*Times*,' *January* 14, 1836.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'TIMES.'

SIR,

I HAD hoped not to have troubled you again on the subject of Mr. Hume, his public statements, and his private secretary, but a circumstance has just occurred very gratifying to me, and which, I should think, must be scarcely less to every manly mind who rejoices in the exposure of a virulent conspiracy. A friend of mine has discovered among my papers at Bradenham the letter of Mr. Bulwer, which originally led to the Wycombe correspondence. Here it follows. I have marked a passage in italics :—

Copy of a letter from Mr. BULWER *to* Mr. DISRAELI, *June* 3, 1832.

MY DEAR DISRAELI,

I HAVE received from my friend, Mr. Hume, a letter addressed to you, which I have forwarded to Bradenham. In case you should not receive it in such good time as may be wished, I may as well observe that in it Mr. Hume expresses his great satisfaction at hearing you are about to start for Wycombe—his high opinion of your talents and principles—and while he regrets he knows no one at Wycombe whom otherwise he would certainly endeavour to interest in your behalf, he avails himself of his high situation in public esteem to remind the electors of Wycombe that the Reform Bill is but a means to the end of good and cheap government, and that they ought to show themselves deserving of the results of that great measure by choosing members of those talents and those principles which can alone advocate the popular cause, and which Mr. Hume joins with me in believing you so eminently possess.

You will receive his letter at latest on Tuesday morning, and so anxious was he in your behalf, that he would not

leave London, though on matters of urgent private business, until he had written it.

Assuring you, &c.,

E. L. BULWER.

That I may not be considered under any circumstances ungrateful to a gentleman who was "so anxious on my behalf that he would not leave London, though on matters of urgent private business," I will just observe that almost ere the ink was dry of the letter in which I acknowledged the receipt of his favour, and the tone of which alone would prove we had then no personal acquaintance, I found this same Mr. Hume, without giving any notice to Mr. Bulwer or myself of his intention, not only exerting his influence in London against me, but absolutely writing canvassing letters in favour of my opponent. On seeking an explanation from him of this conduct, the only time, I repeat, and as I now prove, I ever saw Mr. Hume, he informed me that he could not, on reflection, countenance so violent an opponent to the Whigs.

This letter of Mr. Bulwer, Sir, accounts for the only error which I have committed in my statement, although I wrote from memory. Recollecting that I became acquainted with the contents of Mr. Hume's letter in a communication from Mr. Bulwer, I took it for granted, as in the instance of Mr. O'Connell, that the letter was addressed to Mr. Bulwer, and that Mr. Bulwer communicated the substance of it to me at Bradenham, an error so trivial hardly exceeds a clerical mistake. Every other statement I have made, though I repeat merely writing from memory and in haste, is not only substantially, but absolutely correct. Every statement that Mr. Hume has made, though writing at leisure and with an appeal to documents, is substantially and absolutely incorrect. I had no motive to misrepresent the circumstances,

for they had nothing to do with the merits of my case. Mr. Hume had every motive to misrepresent the circumstances, for on their misrepresentation his case entirely depended. In attempting to crush a political opponent he has hoist with his own petard, and afforded the public a further illustration of his proverbial veracity. As for the poor editor of the 'Globe,' he of course feels like any other tool who has failed in a dirty job. But for the private secretary, who recollects my calling at the house with Mr. Bulwer, seeing and conferring with Mr. Hume, and receiving from his own hands his celebrated autograph, what an invaluable memory he has!

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obliged and obedient servant,

B. DISRAELI.

Jan. 13.

'*Globe*,' *January* 7, 1836.

THE friend in question was Mr. Bulwer. When Mr. Disraeli was standing for Taunton, a solicitor of that town, Mr. Cox, exposed him in two or three really excellently-written pamphlets. To this gentleman's kindness we are indebted for copies of those works, which he forwarded to us at our request. In the last of these there is a letter from Mr. Bulwer to Mr. Cox, which we now give:—

SIR, *London, July* 24, 1835.

IN answer to your letter, I beg to say that Mr. Disraeli first referred me to a printed handbill of his own, espousing short parliaments, vote by ballot, and untaxed knowledge. I conceived these principles to be the pole-star of the sincere reformers, and to be the reverse of Tory ones. I showed that handbill to Mr. Hume, hence the letters of that gentleman and of others.

Mr. Disraeli does not deny that he professed those opinions at that time, but he has explained since that he

intended them for adoption, not against the Tories, but Whigs. With his explanation I have nothing to do. I question his philosophy, but I do not doubt his honour.

When any man tells me that he votes for ballot, short parliaments, and the abolition of taxes on knowledge, I can only suppose him to be a reformer, and such being my principles, I would always give him my support, and I should never dream of asking whether he called himself a Radical or a Tory.

I am, &c.,

To Edward Cox, Esq. E. L. BULWER.

'*Globe*,' *January* 11, 1836.

OUR readers will perhaps think us cruel in adducing the following evidence against Mr. Disraeli, but they will bear witness that he has forced us into this exposure of him. The quarrel commenced with an allusion on our part to his former notorious connexion with that reforming party, which he now treats with such unwarrantable insolence. Mr. Disraeli chose to think he could bully us out of this charge, and he has, step by step, forced us into specific accusations and proofs. To substantiate charges once made, when called upon by the person criminated, is due to our own character, and we have therefore reluctantly answered his defence by appealing to Mr. Scott and Mr. Hume in support of the truth of our statement respecting facts of which they were witnesses.

Mr. Scott, our original informant, has sent the following answer to our appeal of Saturday:—

To the EDITOR of the GLOBE.

SIR,

IN answer to your appeal to me in the 'Globe' of Saturday, whether Mr. Disraeli had called upon Mr. Hume

at his house in Bryanston Square, to solicit his support at the Wycombe Election in 1832, I have no hesitation in stating, that I have a distinct recollection of his having done so, and that he then made a general profession of his political principles, which he stated were in accordance with those which Mr. Hume is well known to advocate. In the multiplicity of business in which Mr. Hume is engaged, and amongst the many applications similar to Mr. Disraeli's, which are made to him on the eve of a general election, I might have forgotten ere now his interview with Mr. Hume, but for the circumstance of a friend of Mr. Hume's stating in a blunt way, on hearing what he had done, that he was very wrong in doing so, as Mr. Disraeli was a d—d Tory, and that Mr. Hume would find him so. This circumstance, and that of the correspondence which followed, with the view of ascertaining what Mr. Disraeli's political opinions really were, impressed the matter on my mind.

I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient Servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

Cleveland Row, St. James's,
11th January.

Mr. Hume has been kind enough to answer our appeal by the following communication:—

To the EDITOR of the GLOBE.

Bryanston Square, Jan. 11, 1836.

SIR,

YOU have appealed to me, in the 'Globe' of the 9th, as to some matters of fact in dispute between you and Mr. B. Disraeli, and it is with considerable reluctance that I answer that appeal.

I have had some doubts how far I should be warranted in referring to private correspondence at the time to clear up these doubts; but, on the whole, I consider it best to all

parties to show, by copies of part of the correspondence, how I became connected with the matters referred to in the 'Times' of the 8th, and in your papers of the 7th and 9th inst., which you have sent me.

To the first question, 'Whether Mr. B. Disraeli called on me in Bryanston Square, to solicit my support at Wycombe,' I answer that my impression certainly is, that he did call on me in Bryanston Square, to solicit my support as a candidate for Wycombe; but I cannot decidedly say whether with Mr. E. L. Bulwer, or alone. To the best of my recollection Mr. Bulwer requested me to give Mr. Disraeli, a friend of his and a warm supporter of mine, a recommendation to some Reformer at Wycombe, where he was going to offer himself as a candidate. I told him that I had no acquaintance there; and he suggested that a few lines from me to Mr. Disraeli, expressive of my wish to see him returned to Parliament, would answer the purpose. I requested Mr. Bulwer to write me to that effect, if he was perfectly satisfied with Mr. Disraeli's political principles; and I annex a copy of his letter (No. 1), dated the 2nd of June 1832, in favour of Mr. Disraeli, which I considered satisfactory. I immediately addressed a letter (No. 2), and inclosed it to Mr. Bulwer, to be forwarded to him. I received a letter (No. 3) from Mr. Disraeli, dated the 5th of June, acknowledging the receipt of my letter of the 2nd.

To the second question, 'Whether Mr. Disraeli gave me to understand that he was a Tory or a Radical,' I can state with perfect confidence that I understood from Mr. Disraeli that he was an ardent supporter, and a zealous advocate of my general political principles, and that if he should obtain a seat in Parliament, he would support them there. If my letter to Mr. Disraeli is not sufficiently explicit as to that point, every person who has watched my political conduct, must be satisfied that I never would have put pen to paper in any other belief.

By the correspondence it appears that Mr. Bulwer wrote

to me under the belief that Mr. Disraeli was a supporter of my reform opinions. I expressed in my letter to Mr. Disraeli a hope that all the Reformers would rally round him as the man who entertained liberal principles on every branch of Government, and was prepared to support reform and economy in every department. Mr. Disraeli on the receipt of that letter expressed himself thus:—"It will be my endeavour that you shall not repent the confidence which you have reposed in me." I believed him to be a Radical Reformer, and certainly placed confidence in him as such.

If there had been any doubt in my mind of Mr. Disraeli having professed himself unequivocally a Liberal, the following paragraph in a letter to him of the 8th of June to me, announcing the resignation of Sir Thomas Baring must have convinced me:—

"I think after what has passed, I have some claim upon you and your friends to prevent any split in the Liberal party here, and any stranger from coming down to oppose us."

As to the third question, it will be seen that the expressions quoted in the 'Globe,' were in my first letter to Mr. Disraeli. To the best of my recollection, I never saw Mr. Disraeli but twice; the first time, as I have already stated, in Bryanston Square, and the second time at the India Board. I never wrote to any third person in favour of Mr. Disraeli.

I remain, your obedient Servant,

JOSEPH HUME.

No. 1 is the copy of Mr. Bulwer's first letter to Mr. Hume: though, under the circumstances of the case, the publication of this letter would be perfectly justifiable, yet as Mr. Bulwer is not in town, and his consent to its publication cannot be obtained, we shall not make it public unless Mr. Disraeli calls on us to do so. We shall only say that in it Mr. Bulwer tells Mr. Hume Mr. Disraeli is very anxious

to have a line from you expressive of a wish for his return. No. 2 is Mr. Hume's letter in consequence written to Mr. Disraeli.

(Copy No. 2.)

Bryanston Square, 2nd June, 1832.

SIR,—As England can only reap the benefit of reform by the electors doing their duty in selecting honest, independent, and talented men, I am much pleased to learn from our mutual friend, Mr. E. L. Bulwer, that you are about to offer yourself as a candidate to represent Wycombe in the new parliament.

I have no personal influence at that place, or I would use it immediately in your favour; but I should hope that the day has arrived when the electors will consider the qualifications of the candidates, and in the exercise of their franchise prove themselves worthy of the new rights they will obtain by the reform.

I hope the reformers will rally round you, who entertain liberal opinions in every branch of government, and are prepared to pledge yourself to support reform and economy in every department as far as the same can be effected consistent with the best interests of the country.

I shall only add that I shall be rejoiced to see you in the new parliament, in the confidence that you will redeem your pledges, and give satisfaction to your constituents if they will place you there.

Wishing you success in your canvass,

I remain your obedient Servant,

To B. Disraeli, Esq. (Signed) JOSEPH HUME.

(Copy No. 3.)

Bradenham House, Wycombe, June 5, 1832.

SIR,—I have had the honour and the gratification of re-

ceiving your letter this morning. Accept my sincere, my most cordial thanks.

It will be my endeavour that you shall not repent the confidence you have reposed in me.

Believe me, Sir, that if it be my fortune to be returned in the present instance to a reformed parliament, I shall remember with satisfaction that that return is mainly attributable to the interest expressed in my success by one of the most distinguished and able of our citizens.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obliged and faithful servant.

(Signed) B. DISRAELI.

Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.

We think we may now close our case against Mr. Disraeli We have adduced our evidence, it is for him, if possible, to rebut it. We shall not be tempted again by mere denials, or explanations, or insolent bravadoes, to continue a controversy with a man who is not entitled to enter on one with us, until he has freed himself from the serious imputations which attach to him.

THE END.

00140880

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016